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NOTES

1. D II 220-52 (*sutta* 19).
2. Ed. E. Senart, III, 197-224; English transl. J. J. Jones, III, 193-219.
3. T I 1 30b-34b.
4. T I 8 207c-213c.
5. Andre Bareau, *Les Sectes bouddhiques du Petit Vehicule*, Publications de l'Ecole francaise d'Extrême Orient, vol. XXXVIII, Saigon 1955 (repr. Paris 1976), p. 31.
6. D II 253.
7. III 208 sq.
8. T I 1 33a.
9. T I 8 210c.
10. Especially see B. C. Law, *Tribes in Ancient India*, Bhandarkar Oriental Series No. 4, 2nd ed., Poona 1973, *passim*.
11. D II 235; Mahāvastu II 208.
12. T I. 1. 32a.
13. Particularly see *Cambridge History of India* I, Cambridge 1922, pp: 429-32 and 470-3.
14. Especially see *The Age of Imperial Unity*, in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R. C. Majumdar et al, III, Bombay 1951 (repr. 1968) pp. 29-36.

BEYOND "BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL"

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I

One of the problems in comparative studies or crosscultural studies, but also one of the most exhilarating dimensions of the ongoing enterprise is the difficulty of matching concepts. The student of a tradition that developed within and also shaped another cultural and intellectual complex is continually challenged by a reciprocal dynamic of gathering the facts and determining the reliability of that information within the tradition under study while checking the concepts with which the student is working in his or her own thinking. On occasion a scholar will discern at the outset an awryness of previously matched categories of thought and set about to provide a sustained argument putting the matter straight, demonstrating that terms, concepts, ideas present in one cultural complex do not coincide with customarily established allegedly corresponding concepts in the tradition or traditions being studied. On occasion scholars have been able to advance our understanding of a tradition being studied by reinterpreting terms and concepts derived from their own cultural and intellectual context, or by placing those terms in a new juxtaposition, or by developing new phrases or categories incorporating those concepts. On both occasions the subject is being advanced by contributions to clarity that leads to a deeper understanding.

In this chapter, I would like firstly to draw attention to the way five representative scholars, four Westerners and one Theravāda bhikkhu, have made contributions to a general understanding of what some might call Theravāda Buddhist ethics. Two scholars consider the Theravāda case in a context of comparative religious ethics, one touches upon our subject in the context of South Asian ethical theories, another writes from a perspective from within the Theravāda frame of reference, and the fifth, a bhikkhu, seeks to present the teachings of his heritage to a Western audience. On a first reading, what these writers are sharing might appear confusing; their definitions appear poles apart. Their probes, however, are moving Western considerations of ethics and/or morality closer to an indigenous Theravāda orientation. There is among these authors an awareness that ethics and/or morality represent a universal human category of behaviour and an inchoate sense that ethics and/or morality might have been definitionally culturally specific. This dynamic issue is seen readily in their considerations of *anattā* and Nibbāna.

On occasion a problem arises when a phrase gets picked up in comparative studies, becomes used here and there initially, then almost of its own becomes a frequent way of discussing a matter. One such phrase, "beyond good and evil", has entered into discussions about ethics in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition and has tended to remain in place like a grain of dust in a highly sophisticated, intricate, interlocking piece of machinery, being itself of foreign origin, making its presence known but in no way contributing to the functioning of the unit.

In this chapter, I would like secondly to go beyond the current usage of "beyond good and evil" in order to deal more adequately with a complex of positive evaluative concepts in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition that indicates clearly an appraisal of what is considered good in human conduct, in the quality of character that represents humanity at its best.

In developing this chapter, I do not wish to be argumentative, to parade a host of competent scholars before the reader and to set about chipping here and there—one usually can write a lot in doing this; but also one usually ends up proposing little that is of general interest, and perhaps less, too, that will serve us well in our study of Buddhists past and present.

II

It is becoming apparent that the West has worked with a complex of ideas, for example ethics, morals (morality), religion, and law, that has had a history peculiar to the West, that has led generations of scholars to seek for clarification by definitional differentiation between these concepts,[1] that has led generations of scholars to interpret non-Western human behaviour in light of them.[2]

In recent times, ethics has come to be the preferred English term to designate systematic reflection on morality, apparently, on the American scene, having supplanted the study known more prominently in England as moral philosophy. Morality has come to refer to a composite of volitions, actions, and character of responsible persons in the process of differentiating between right and wrong, good and bad, and so on. Ethics has tended to represent the activity of justifying or validating this process of differentiation.

The Theravāda tradition has developed within a broad cultural matrix different from the West, of course. This tradition also presents to Western students a pattern of concepts within the more specialized formulation that is novel and forms a constellation not readily matched or replicated by customary English usage of terms like ethics, morals (morality), religion, and law.

Two notions within the Theravāda heritage that have given pause to Western students of comparative ethics are *anattā* and Nibbāna. The former, *anattā*, seems at first blush to stand in direct opposition to much that has provided the cornerstone of Western ethical theory, the moral accountability of a discrete, autonomous self. And Nibbāna, discerned by Western students as the ultimate goal in human life as Theravāda Buddhists have maintained, remains ineffable.

David Little and Sumner B. Twiss have attempted to deal with this *anattā* dimension and, noting both the outward orientation of Buddhist religious living as well as the inward, reflective and developmental dimension in Buddhist religious discipline, have suggested that the prominent posture of Theravāda Buddhist ethics represents a "transpersonal teleology", either in a "qualified intrapersonal teleology" or in a "qualified extrapersonal teleology"[3] with regard to final justification. For these scholars, the teleology involved concerns the attainment of Nibbāna. The qualification noted deals with the affirmation of *anattā*, that ultimately there is no real, substantial, differentiated, discrete self. Hence, there is the stress on "transpersonal".

Little and Twiss find in their consideration of the early Buddhist records a set of guidelines for behaviour that is practical, cognitive, and teleologically oriented. These authors want to qualify this because of a transpersonal dimension suggested by an interpretation of Nibbāna in light of the *anattā* doctrine. They write,

> Fundamentally, morality, while present and important in Theravadin thought, is there provisionally at best. 'In the ultimate sense', which is to say when locked at in respect to 'the supreme dharma', [nirvāna, 'the supreme dharma'] discussion of morality is inappropriate because the notion of morality presupposes persons, or at least intentions normally associated with persons, and these are not found in nirvāna.[4]

Gerald Larson has made a probe into related ethical considerations and has suggested three categories that represent distinct positions within the range of moral theorizing in South Asia, two of which he considers relevant to the Buddhist case: (1) a position classified as "naturalistic non-intuitionist cognitivism", with regard to what is good, which he attributes to "early ('Theravāda') Buddhist traditions", and (2) a position classified as "non-naturalistic, intuitionist a-moralism", which Larson mentions "appears to suggest that there is nothing that is truly good"! This position he notes "is characteristic of Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Vedānta, much of Mahāyāna Buddhist theorizing. . ".[5] About this second position, Larson observes,

> The position is usually characterized as maintaining that the ultimate is 'beyond good and evil' which, in my view, is simply a euphemism for what is really a much stronger moral claim, namely that there is nothing that is intrinsically good. The experience of *mokṣa, kaivalya, nirvāṇa*, or whatever one wishes to call it, is simply not a moral experience. It is the denial of ethics and morality, or putting the matter another way, it is the denial that moral and ethical theorizing has any value at all.[6]

Further, Larson suggests that these two positions, when characterized as normative ethical formulations, would respectively yield theoretical classification as (1) "Teleological cognitivism," and (2) "Gnoseological intuitionism".[7] Larson's second position, a "non-naturalistic, intuitionist a-moralism", which is also "Gnoseological intuitionism," is nevertheless presented as a normative ethical position, "a serious normative ethical claim...." To fail to discern this characteristic would be, for Larson, "a serious interpretive mistake on analogy, for example, with the kind of mistake an interpreter makes who fails to see a Sartrean atheism as an authentic theological position".[8]

Larson is not entirely on the mark, in my judgment, when he differentiates Theravāda and Mahāyāna in light of his two categories that we have mentioned. The two concepts of cognitivism and intuitionism are not sufficeintly subtle, are much too sharply drawn to relate the activity of the human mind at the transitional moments of personal transformation for those engaged in the process of transcending as Theravāda Buddhists have apprehended it. The Theravāda position appears to me, upon careful inquiry into the arising of the supramundane or world-transcending path (*magga*) in the awareness of a person, to be closer to Larson's second category.

Little, Twiss, and Larson are developing our thinking about the Theravāda Buddhist case *within* the concepts of ethics and morality. Larson thinks that in the second category of ethical theorizing the highest objective realized through intuitive wisdom "totally transcends the good".[9] Yet, he urges that this position be seen as a serious normative ethical claim that can be so interpreted only within its total framework. Little and Twiss, having noted a transpersonal teleology in Theravāda Buddhist morality, also mention that this position is a "religious-moral system",[10] by which they mean "Other-impinging acts, together with whatever sacred-impinging acts there are in the system, are validated by a religious norm."[11]

These writers, aware of the ineffability of Nibbāna, the subtle openness of the notion of Nibbāna and the *anattā* doctrine, see in the Buddhist complex a religious-moral system in which morality is provisionally present, or an ethical claim that there is nothing intrinsically good, more usually expressed by reference to an ultimate state beyond good and evil.

It seems that a reader is led to conclude that, on the one hand, if morality is provisional at best in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition it somehow no longer remains so were one to speak of the tradition as a religious-moral system justified by a transpersonal teleology, i.e., Nibbāna. Or, if nothing is held to be intrinsically good, i.e., the ultimate state is beyond good and evil, the position nevertheless makes an ethical claim. This might strike one as a bit confusing, and well that it should. Yet at the same time these writers are making constructive contributions to our developing understanding of the Theravāda orientation by developing new methods and categories, by pressing the notion of ethics in the English medium.

Joanna Macy has found in contemporary systems theory a mode of interpreting the dynamic of *anattā* in the context of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, a mode of interpreting that "presents the structure of a living system as interdeterminative with its function or behaviour."[12] Quoting Karl Deutsch, "The cognitive system is changing and remaking itself with each decision in the present. Thanks to what it has learned in the past, it is not wholly subject to the present. Thanks to what it can still learn, it is not wholly subject to the past....", Macy sets before the reader her observation that

> The Buddha's emphasis on will does not, then, run counter to the *anattā* doctrine and suggest there must be some hidden abiding self. Nor does the doctrine of *anattā* imply any weakening of moral responsibility. Indeed the very process of choice-making constitutes our changing, but continuous identity. We cannot escape the effect of our choices, because that is what we are. These consequences are inescapable, not because there is a God that watches and tallies, but because independent co-arising our acts co-determine what we become.[13]

Anattā, for Macy, provides a moral ground:

> Basic to the ethic is the radical view of the self, which the teachings present. It is an interdependent, self-organizing process shaped by the flow of experience and the choices that condition this flow. Possessed of no 'I' apart from what it feels, sees, thinks, does, the self does not *have* experience, it *is* its experience. Hence in the Buddhist ethic the error of egoicity. The problem with 'mine-ness' (*mamattā*) is not just the greed it engenders, but the fundamental error it expresses and reinforces—that of considering the self as an independent, autonomous entity.[14]

What some theorists might consider foundational for a viable system of ethics, namely an independent, differentiated, autonomous agent bearing moral responsibility, Theravāda Buddhists have tended to consider a fundamental error, as Macy puts it. Further, the doctrine of *anattā*, which has played a major role in the development of the presentation by Little and Twiss, wherein is recognized consequently a provisional presence of morality in the Theravāda framework,[15] is considered by Macy to be a "moral ground".[16]

What is one to do with an investigation of ethics or morality, which notions have been nurtured in Western intellectual history in an arena of discursive dualities such as good and bad, right and wrong, and so on, upon turning to a religious tradition that has delicately and rigorously maintained that the highest state, Nibbāna, transcends the ability of human discursive conceptualizations to comprehend it? Ven. Dr. H. Saddhatissa has written,

> In the first place, according to Buddhist and other Indian thought the highest state is one which lies beyond good and evil. In the second place, according to Buddhism there is no break between the moral teaching and that which pertains directly to the ideal state....[17]

He continues by stating that

> the ultimate ideal aim which may serve as the ultimate standard of right conduct, relates, according to Buddhist thought, to the supramundane or *lokuttara* state, and the connection between the moralities of everyday life and this *lokuttara* state is one which is entirely covered by the Buddha's teaching. It is, in fact, that which is known to Buddhists as *mārga, magga*, the Path, the Road, along which each person must travel for himself beginning with the practice of the common moralities up to the supramundane state beyond good and evil. From this point of view Buddhism can be said to provide the complete ethical study.[18]

Although Saddhatissa speaks of the highest state being beyond good and evil, by locating the focus of consideration on *magga*, this Buddhist scholar interprets the Buddhist teachings as providing "the complete ethical study".

Our authors are in basic agreement, although this might not be readily apparent. Acknowledging that the *anattā* notion involves in some sense a transpersonal orientation (in some way going beyond a sense of "personal" customarily used in the English medium), recognizing, too, that Nibbāna transcends conceptualization, somehow we meet in the Theravāda case a position that these writers conclude is religious, moral, and ethical. But the journey to this conclusion has not been without some confusion.

Perhaps we might move further into clarity by taking up focal Pali terms and by giving some consideration to the application of those terms within the framework of the Theravāda perspective, which is not primarily concerned with doctrinal formulations and subsequent conceptual ramifications but with the function of those views in providing orientation in the life setting, as Macy has done with the *anattā* notion, as Saddhātissa has done with *magga*.

III

One no doubt has read or heard in the English language something like, "the objective in Buddhism is to go beyond good and evil", or that "the arahant is beyond good and evil", or "has gone beyond good and evil", or that "the ultimate is 'beyond good and evil'" or "the highest state is one which lies beyond good and evil", as we have just noted. I think we can move beyond this observation, represented in its general pattern of "beyond good and evil", in an attempt to work more subtly, more adequately, with the complex and cumulative statements within the Theravāda tradition about what constitutes the highest evaluative affirmation of the purpose of human life. In a consideration of human behaviour at its best, when one stresses that an arahant has "gone beyond good and evil",[19] one speaks too quickly, speaks not enough, and what is said is not adequate to catch the subtlety of Theravāda Buddhist statements about the transformational moment.

Let me state the issues: whether or not a fully accomplished person, one who has realized Nibbāna, has gone beyond good and evil depends (1) on what one means by good, (2) at what point such a person "goes beyond", which depends heavily upon (3) which Pali terms one chooses to represent the English word and concept(s) "good". Whether the Theravāda case provides a consistent ethic depends on (4) whether one understands good as an ethical and/or moral category and, of course, (5) what one means by ethics and/or morality. The matter is not made less complex by reminding ourselves that there is no one Pali term equivalent to the contemporary English use of "ethics" in "a study of ethics", or "a theory of ethics".

Space is much too limited for one to provide a discussion of all five points noted. I will address only matters related to issues 2-3 in the remainder of this chapter, leaving questions related to issues 1, 4-5 for further reflection.

Why have a number of writers in the West, and more recently some Theravāda Buddhists, seized on the English expression of "beyond good and evil" in an analysis of a dimension of what is called Buddhist ethics? In a study responding to this question, it would seem Nietzsche would loom large, but more intriguing would be the possibility that Nietzsche has been misunderstood in *this* use of *this* phrase, "beyond good and evil" (*Jenseits von Gut und Boese*).[20] Conceivably, the notion of going beyond a particular interpretation of what is ethical might have been due to some extent to a reading of the pseudonymous authors penned by Kierkegaard—one has read of the so-called three stages: the aesthetic, the ethical and the religious. But it is likely that these so-called stages do not represent the personal position of Kierkegaard[21] and it is more likely that applying these stages to the religious perspective of Theravāda Buddhists will not go beyond the barriers of an "outsider" *imaginink* the fundamental orientation of life of an "insider", a reflective, knowledgeable Theravāda Buddhist.

Theravāda Buddhists have an abundance of technical terms that communicate positive evaluative appraisals, terms that represent what is commendable, both with regard to act and to quality of person. It is not an easy matter to choose which of these terms one wants to represent the English word "good" so that, if this be the intent, one can then say that an arahant has gone beyond it. The term that yields itself most easily as an equivalent of "good", perhaps for those who want to press the point quickly that an arahant has gone beyond it, is *puñña*, roughly also translated as "merit". And besides its own negative, *apuñña*, a standard Pali term very frequently met in opposition to *puñña*, which one could translate "evil", preferably "bad", is *pāpa*. There are references in the Pali texts that suggest that a person in whom all defilements are destroyed, an arahant, an ideal person who has fully realized salvific truth has gone beyond, has abandoned or has destroyed *puñña* and *pāpa*.[22]

But why choose *puñña* and *pāpa* to represent "good and evil" beyond which an arahant is said to have gone? Certainly an arahant must go beyond,

at is leave behind, become dissociated from "evil" or what is bad, *pāpa*. ikewise, within the framework of Buddhist thought it is equally clear that tions that are expressive of a desire for bettering one's present and future ondition now and in the next life when one enters another life sequence e not the actions that are expressive of the mental state of an arahant or whom there is no again-becoming. Such *puñña*-acts (*puñña-kamma*) re not those of an arahant. Saying that an arahant has left behind, has one beyond *puññakamma* tells us little that is new. Saying, on the basis f an analysis of these two terms, *puñña* and *pāpa*, that an arahant has ntered into a non-ethical or a-mcral or non-moral (which should not imply "unethical" or "immoral") sphere hardly represents an attempt to grapple vith and perhaps enlarge our Western notions of ethics.

There are other terms in Pāli with which we might work to lead us further nto a consideration of the process that leads from the point of leaving ehind *puññakamma*, meritorious acts, through a process on the "stages" f sanctification, that is from the path of stream attainer up to the path of rahantship. The evaluative term for the qualities of persons on these stages r paths is *kusala*, a term that readily yields much of what one means by 'good".

P. D. Premasiri of the University of Sri Lanka has argued[23] that in what he calls "Early Buddhism" the term *kusala* carried a spectrum of meaning much broader than the term *puñña* and that the later commentarial tradition tended to confuse these terms, tended to use them interchangeably, even synonymously. Premasiri is right, it seems to me, that even in the canonical strata, *kusala* and *puñña* are met in senses communicating an overlapping in meaning or semantic usage. In his conclusion to his study, Premasiri notes that *kusala*, unlike *puñña*, represents the qualities with which one who has attained Nibbāna, who has become free from all that is designated by *akusala*, *puñña* and *pāpa*, is endowed. He writes that an assertion "that the Buddhist saint [arahant] is beyond good and bad can therefore be seen to be the result of a terminological muddle".[24]

Perhaps two refinements of Premasiri's noteworthy contribution might be made. Firstly, the overlapping in meaning of *kusala* and *puñña* in the Nikāyas tends to be present in those passages where *kusala* suggests one's volition with regard to thought, speech and action. Where there is a distinction between *kusala* and *puñña*, the semantic function of *kusala* has to do primarily with qualities (*dhammā*) with which a person is endowed. Secondly, although the Pali commentarial and Sinhalese Buddhist literary tradition, has tended to fuse *kusala* and *puñña*,[25] of which Premasiri generally is aware, the commentarial tradition maintains the distinction that Premasiri argued was the case of the early period of the Buddhist tradition. Premasiri notes that the later tradition was aware of this distinction but does not go into the matter, save for two references.[26]

Fundamentally, the distinction between *kusala* and *puñña* is maintained

in the commentarial tradition. Firstly, the commentarial tradition maintains the interpretation of the roots of *kusala* (*kusala-mūla*) to be threefold, the absence of greed (*alobha*), the absence of avarice (*adosa*) and the absence of delusion (*amoha*),[27] which three roots provide the foundation for *puñña* at its best, so to speak, and for cultivating further training in the way.

Secondly, the commentarial tradition tends to restrict its explanations of *puñña* to categories pertaining to the three realms of sentient existence *within saṃsāra*,[28] while frequently interpreting *kusala* as extending beyond these three spheres to include also a fourth, the world-transcending soteriological process expressed directly as *catumaggasampayoga*[29] or indirectly in the *catubhūmaka*,[30] having to do with the three spheres within *saṃsāra*, and a fourth which leads to Nibbāna. With regard to this soteriological process, the commentarial tradition uses *kusala* to modify the four paths, including *arahattamagga*.[31] Although there is a basis for one to infer that *kusala* could also modify Nibbāna in the commentarial tradition,[32] it seems that the mainstream of that tradition would have us pause before making this move, pause not because of a lack of certainty or lack of clarity, but pause so as not to rush headlong into a delicate matter.

The weight of the Theravāda tradition undoubtedly stresses as the ideal person the Buddha and holds that person and that life as the highest example worthy of emulation. In the standard formula recited on the occasion of remembering the Buddha, one finds a comment about the Buddha's conduct, which the commentarial tradition unhesitatingly interprets as being characterized by moral virtue (*sīla*),[33] as the fulfilment of great compassion (*mahākāruṇika*), as being directed toward what is beneficial for others (*attha*).[34] He is called the well-gone one (*sugata*) because of a mode of going that is beautiful (*sobhanagamanatā*), because he has gone to a pure place (*sundaraṃ ṭhānaṃ gatattā*), because he has gone properly (*sammāgatattā*) and so forth.[35] And one might also note another evaluative term, *sat*, in the following statement:

> The sweet fragrance of the virtue of good persons [*sappurisānaṃ*.... *sīlagandho*]—of Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas and their *sāvakas*, disciples—goes against the wind.[36]

and, further, one might note the use of the highest gain, or attainment, or profit, or goal, or good, that which seems to be behind *summum bonum*, so frequently used by Theravāda Buddhists, namely *uttamattham*.[37] And one will remember that *kusala* is used to modify numerous qualities, at one count over fifty,[38] several of which, particularly *sammādiṭṭhi*, *sammāsati*, *alobha*, *adosa*, *amoha* and *paññā*, cannot be said to be foreign to the arahant.

Well then, an accomplished person, a Buddha, a Pacceka Buddha, an arahant, on the basis of all these positive evaluative terms surely, from the Theravāda perspective, must be pronounced *good*, both in act and in person, albeit not as a substantial underlying continually existing entity. And it would seem that from the Theravāda perspective, even if not from a perspec-

tive that some might regard the realm of what constitutes ethics the case is closed.

But to say this without further ado might be rushing headlong through a delicate matter carefully nurtured in the memory of the Theravāda tradition.

The tradition has made a profound affirmation with two dimensions. Firstly the arising of the moment of stream attainment is not itself the immediate result of one's action. Although one might exert long and arduously to prepare for this moment, even to bring about the conditions for its occurrence, that it happens, that *magga* arises is not the immediate result of one's will or actions because there cannot simultaneously occur effort and defilements the discarding of which that effort is exerted. Were this to be the case, "the development of *magga* would be tinged with the defiled conditions [of the mind]".[39] Professor M. Palihawadana of the University of Sri Lanka (Sri Jayewardenepura) has drawn our attention to this point and traces its theme to a passage in the canonical literature, a portion of that passage I quote:

> Monks, for a person who is virtuous [*sīlavato*], well-endowed with virtue [*sīlasampannassa*], there is no need of the effort of will [*na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ*]: 'Let freedom from remorse arise in me.' It is a matter of nature [*dhammatā*] that freedom from remorse arises in such a person.[40]

Palihawadana concludes,

> the *magga* event, swiftly arising after a moment of the minds's creative passiveness, regenerates and makes a new person of the pilgrim and gives him his first vision of *Nibbāna*. It is the true blessed event of the religious life of the Theravāda Buddhist.[41]

The second dimension of this profound affirmation is that *magga*, interpreted as four paths, does not yield a result or results that fall into the category of *kamma-vipāka*. The sole results of these paths are the associated *phala* or fructifications of the path attained. The activities of an arahant and his meditative states are said to be good (*kusala*) yet are "karmically inoperative".[42]

The commentarial tradition records that there is a moment when even *kusala* that exists because of insight meditation (*vipassanā*) is dissolved.[43] It appears that the activity of mind referred to here is that known as *kiriyā-citta*, "functioning consciousness", or mental functioning in relation to action but ineffective as to karmic result.[44] It seems to me that such mind would have "ejected wishes" (*vantāso*) and would be one that "knows the Unmade" (*akataññū*) as a Dhammapada verse and the commentarial gloss on that verse suggest. We are talking about a person supreme (*purisuttamo*).[45]

One might attempt to move the position "beyond good and evil" one more step, from beyond *puñña* or *apuñña* or *pāpa* to beyond *kusala* and *akusala*. But such move cannot be established because of the presence of *kusala* as well as what one might call a "good-complex" of associative positive evaluative terms used to characterize such person (*purisuttamo*). But what of this subtle activity in the consciousness of an arahant that suggests the absence of karmic consequences? This functioning consciousness is present in one who has no evil to get something more because Nibbāna has arisen. Were this functioning consciousness not present, how could one speak of Nibbāna arising? Were a consciousness capable of engendering *vipāka* to be active at the arising of Nibbāna, this consciousness could, conceivably, be said to taint this arising or to suggest that a person immediately caused the arising of Nibbāna. And so the notion of functioning consciousness at this stage of an arahant has continued to be held by the Theravāda thinkers not because the point to be made is that the arahant has gone beyond "good and evil" or "good and bad", but, more than that, beyond that, to state with impressive subtlety and insight, while being simultaneously loyal to the tradition and faithful to the reality of Nibbāna-realization, that Nibbāna arises when the conditions are present, but one does not cause this arising.

The tradition has spoken of this full realization of Nibbāna and of those who have had this realization in the most positive evaluative terms the Pāli language carries. And also the tradition has made it clear that Nibbāna can in no way be said to be immediately caused by one. For a person to say "I am good" and to say that such Nibbāna-realization has occurred would strike one as representing a situation gone awry.

In conclusion, to speak of an arahant, or a Buddha, or a Pacceka Buddha as having "gone beyond good and evil" really tells us more about what interpretation of "good" is being used—it tells us little about the way the Theravāda tradition has valued such persons, and little, too, about the person at the moment of Nibbāna-realization. Whether or not such persons function within the realm of what one might call ethics depends upon whether one's notion of ethics is adequate.[46] And this is a problem of the English medium of the Western intellectual heritage, not of Theravāda Buddhists.

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NOTES

1. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (xvv. ethic, moral) provides examples, now several centuries old, of differentiations between ethics and moral virtues on the one hand and orientations to theism or Christian virtues on the other.
2. On the concept "religion" in this matter, see the major work by Wilfred Cantwell Smith *The Meaning and End of Religion*: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963); reissued in New York: New American Library (Mentor Books), 1964; in London: New English Library (Mentor Books), 1965; and with an Introduction by John Hick in New York: Harper and Row, 1978.
3. David Little and Sumner B. Twiss *Comparative Religious Ethics* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 236.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 247. These authors write elsewhere, p. 108, "Trans-personal norms are, by definition, non-moral, although they may be religious in character."
5. Gerald James Larson "Hindu and Buddhist Perspectives on the Notion of the Good," an unpublished paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, Chicago, April 3, 1982. pp. 9-11.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 10
7. *Ibid.*, p. 11
8. *Ibid.*, p. 13
9. *Ibid.*
10. Little and Twiss, op. cit., pp. 238, 241 and 246
11. *Ibid.*, p. 118
12. Joanna Rogers Macy "Dependent Co-arising: The Distinctiveness of Buddhist Ethics," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 7, No. 1, University of Notre Dame, Indiana 1979, p. 45.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
15. See Little and Twiss, op. cit., pp. 246-247.
16. Macy, op. cit., p. 42.
17. H. Saddhatissa *Buddhist Ethics*: Essence of Buddhism (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1970), p. 18.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
19. On the Indian scene and in the Hindu case, Franklin Edgerton writes, "But when the goal is reached, one is beyond good and evil." See his "Dominant Ideas in the Formation of Indian Culture," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 62 (Sept. 1942), p. 155. A. L. Herman modifies Edgerton's "ordinary norm" and "extraordinary norm" thesis as it might apply to Theravāda, but continues a usage of "beyond good and evil". See his "Ethical Theory in Theravāda Buddhism," *The Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLVII (Jan.-Dec. 1961), p. 185. See also the usage of this phrase by Gunapala Dharmasiri *A Buddhist Critique of the Christian Concept of God* (Colombo: Lake House Investments Ltd., 1974), p. 106.

    There are too many instances of the use of this phrase to note here. I have noted only these three as examples provided by (1) a recent leading Western Indologist, (2) a Western philosopher writing as a graduate student, and (3) a Sinhalese Buddhist layman who has studied to some degree the Christian tradition.
20. C. A. F. Rhys Davids uses the expression "beyond the Good and the Bad"; and notes this phrase as coming from "Nietzsche on Buddhism in 'Der Antichrist'" in her translation of the *Dhammasangani*, *A Buddhist Manual of Psychological Ethics* [New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1975 of the work first published by the Royal Asiatic Society in 1900], p. civ. For Nietzsche, the notion "bad" represents an aristocratic extension from an aristocratically originated notion of "good" while "evil" had as its origin resentment which comprised a part of "slave morality". A transvaluation of values occurred, Nietzsche believed, when aristocratically originated "good" became labelled as the plebeian-originated "evil" and the aristocratically originated "bad" now became the plebeian "good". See Friedrich Nietzsche *The Genealogy of Morals*: A Polemic, translated by Horace B. Samuel (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1910) especially article II, pp. 38-39.

    When, with regard to analyzing Theravāda, a shift from "beyond the Good and the Bad" or "beyond good and bad" to "beyond good and evil" was made is not clear. The latter phrase is the more current. Conceivably, when persons became less familiar with Nietzsche and more conscious that theists would form a part of the reading public, such shift occurred.
21. Stephen Crites suggests that upon careful analysis one would find that the so-called three stages yield a fourfold scheme: aesthetic, ethical, religion A [knight of Infinite

resignation], and religion B [knight of faith]. And Crites notes that there appears to be "two intermediate stages of irony and humor", and mentions, further, a footnote by Johannes Climacus, in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, where a sevenfold tabulation appears; and possibly some stages appear within the aesthetic. Crites writes, "so there seems in principle no end to the exfoliation of Kierkegaardian stages". Crites still prefers to hold to a scheme of sorts, proposing a distinction "between the aesthetic and the existential, regarding the ethical and religious spheres as existential discriminations". See Stephen Crites "Pseudonymous Authorship as Art and as Act," *Kierkegaard*: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Josiah Thomson (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., an Anchor Book 1972), pp. 200-201.

    Kierkegaard himself wrote,

> So in the pseudonymous works [where the so-called stages appear] there is not a single word which is mine, I have no opinion about these works except as third person, no knowledge of their meaning except as a reader, not the remotest private relation to them, since such a thing is impossible in the case of a doubly reflected communication. One single word of mine uttered personally in my own name would be an instance of presumptuous self-forgetfulness, and dialectically viewed it would incur with one word the guilt of annihilating the pseudonyms.

    S. Kierkegaard "A First and Last Declaration," four pages following the text of *Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, translated from the Danish by David F. Swenson and completed with Introduction and Notes by Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) [seventh printing of the work first published in 1941]. p. 551 (unpaginated). I am indebted to my colleague M. Holmes Hartshorne for first alerting me to this passage, which is also noted by Josiah Thompson "The Master of Irony," *Kierkegaard*: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Josiah Thompson], op. cit., p. 104. Thompson is persuasive when he writes, "The central focus of the pseudonymous works is neither ethics nor religion nor aesthetics, but rather the dialectic of the life of imagination" (op. cit., p. 113). "For if the pseudonymous works have shown us anything, it is that *all the so-called 'existential' movements* [and in *failure*. If failure is the outcome of all attempts to make these movements [from the aesthetic to the ethical to the religious and through whatever intervening sub-stages], then how can their stimulation be the aim of the authorship? It can, only if the recognition of failure and not the movements is the point" (*ibid.*, p. 160). And Thompson concludes on this point, "It is failure, I submit, the necessary failure of all human projects, that is at once the central meaning of the pseudonyms, as well as the source of their deepest religious import" (*ibid.*, pp. 160-161).

    The relevance of Kierkegaard's contribution for a study of the Theravāda would hardly be that the arahant has gone beyond the ethical to the religious, but that without *dhamma*, one would not be able to become an arahant. As a Theravāda Buddhist might use Thompson's words to reflect not only an understanding of the human predicament but also the religious appreception of religious life; without *dhamma* we are confronted with "our ineradicable incapacity to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps" (*ibid.*, p. 162.).
22. See, for example, Dhp 39, 267, 412; Sn 547, 790; and see also Netti p. 96, and Pv II 6.15. For other references, see P. D. Premasiri "Interpretation of Two Principal Ethical Terms in Early Buddhism," *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 1976), pp. 63-74.
23. Premasiri, *loc. cit.*
24. Premasiri's succinct observation is as follows:

    > "*Puñña* in its canonical use generally signified the actions etc. which conduce to a happy consequence to the agent in a future existence. The term was clearly borrowed from the earlier ethical terminology of the Brahmanic tradition. *Kusala*, on the other hand, generally signified that which conduces to spiritual bliss culminating in the attainment of the highest state of *nibbāna* which leaves no room for the fruition of any actions. It may be said to be a specifically Buddhist usage, perhaps because it was intended to signify a different sense of ethical value from that signified by *puñña*. When one attains *nibbāna*, (the state which is equivalent to arahantship) a person is fully endowed with *kusala* qualities and is free from *akusala* as well as both *puñña* and *pāpa*. The assertion which is almost universally made by modern interpreters of Buddhist ethics that the Buddhist saint is beyond good and bad can therefore be seen to be the result of a terminological muddle." *Ibid.*, p. 74.
25. The references are too many to list here. Only examples are necessary. See DhpA I. 153 (on Dhp 18): "'*katapuñño' ti nānappakārassa puññassa kattā; 'ubhayatthā*'

ti idha 'katam me kusalam akatam pāpam' ti nandati. parattha vipākam anubhavanto nandati. . . '' '''One who has done *puñña*;' a doer of various kinds of *puñña*. 'At both places;' here he rejoices, thinking '*kusala* (acts) have been done by me, *pāpa* (acts) have not been done.' In the hereafter he rejoices experiencing the fruits (of actions done here).'' See also DhpA I 132 (on Dhp 16). In the Aṭṭhakathāsūci, edited by Pandita Kosgoda Sirisumedha Thero, revised by Pandita Kosgoda Dhammavaṃsa Thero (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1969), a detailed listing of commentarial glosses, III 754b, *kusala dasahupāgato* is noted as being glossed, *kusalehi dasahi samannāgato, dānādīhi dasahi puññakiriyavatthūhi dasahi kusalakammapathehi vā yutto ti attho*. In the *Śri Sumaṅgala Śabdakoṣaya* by Ven. Pandit W. Sorata Nāyaka Thera (Colombo: Anula Press, Part II, 1956; part I, 2nd edition, 1963), one notes (I 286) for *kuśala-dharma, pin*; for *kuśala-phala, piṇin lābena yahapat phala*; *for kuśala-vipāka, pinvalin lābena yahapat phala*; for *kuśala-hetu, pinvalaṭa hetu vana alobha adosa amoha yana tuṇa*; for *puṇya* (II 582) *sita pivituru karaṇa kuśaladharmaya*; for *pin pala* (II 152), *puṇyaphalaya, kuśalavipākaya*; for *pin daham, kuśaladharmaya*; for *pin kam, kuśalakriyāva*; for *puñña, puṇyaya kuśalaya*.

References in the Aṭṭhakathāsūci are to texts issued in the Hewavitarne series, to which I do not have access.

26. References to later literature provided by Premasiri are to the Niddesa and Dīghanikāyaṭṭhakathā. Premasiri, op. cit., 72-73.
27. See, for example, M I 47, 489; Vism XIV 89; Aṭṭhakathāsūci III 752a; *Śri Sumaṅgala Śabdakoṣaya* I 287a.
28. See, for example, the late, but canonical source, Nd I 90: *puññam vuccati yam kiñc tedhātukam kusal' abhisaṅkhāram; apuññam vuccati sabbam akusalam.*''
29. Vism XIV 88: *kusala* is ''*Lokuttaram catumaggasampayogato catubbidhan ti.*''
30. The Aṭṭhakathāsūci, III 751-755, provides eight commentarial glosses presenting this interpretation.
31. See the Aṭṭhakathāsūci III 754 noting two occasions providing this interpretation.
32. See the Aṭṭhakathāsūci III 753a: *maggakusalassa ceva phalakusalassa ca adhigamatthāya.*
33. Vism VII 31: *Caraṇan ti sīlasaṃvaro. . . . 'ariyasāvako sīlavā hoti' ti . . . . . caraṇena samannāgato; tena vuccati vijjācaraṇasampanno ti.* See also A V 66, a reference noted also by Premasiri, op. cit., n. 65, p. 71.
34. Vism VII 32: *caraṇasampadā mahākāruṇikatāya. . . . . mahākāruṇikatāya anatthaṃ parivajjetvā atthe niyojeti. . . .*
35. Vism VII 33: *Sobhanagamanattā, sundaraṃ ṭhānaṃ gatattā sammāgatattā.*
36. DhpA I 422 (on Dhp 55): *Satañ ca gandho ti sappurisānam pana Buddhapaccekabuddhasāvakānaṃ sīlagandho paṭivātam eti.* See also DhpA I 434 (on Dhp 57) where the commentary uses *sampannasīlānam*, ''those having possessed-virtues'', to refer to those in whom the influxes are extinct (*khīṇāsava*), i.e., arahants.
37. The Aṭṭhakathāsūci, II 458a, provides references to commentaries where *uttamattham* is taken to mean Nibbāna or the state of arahantship (*arahattaṃ*).
38. See *Śri Sumaṅgala Śabdakoṣaya*, I 287, *sv. kusal-damsapaṇasa.*
39. Vism XXII 78, as translated by M. Palihawadana in his article, ''Is There a Theravāda Buddhist Idea of Grace?'' in *Christian Faith in a Religiously Plural World*, edited by Donald G. Dawe and John B. Carman (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1978) p. 183.
40. A V 2-3. The translation is Palihawadana's, *loc. cit.* The passage reads in Pali: *Sīlavato bhikkhave sīlasampannassa na cetanāya karaṇīyam 'avippaṭisāro me uppajjatū' ti. Dhammatā. esā bhikkhave, yaṃ sīlavato sīlasampannassa avippaṭisāro uppajjati.* The passage continues to speak of the same process with regard to the realization of knowledge and vision of release that arises as a matter of nature without the activity of the will. See A V 3 and Palihawadana's translation, op. cit., pp. 183-184.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
42. See Nyanatiloka *Buddhist Dictionary*: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines, third revised and enlarged edition, edited by Nyanaponika (Colombo: Frewin and Co. Ltd, 1972), p. 88, *sv. kusala.*
43. The Aṭṭhakathāsūci III 753a: *kusalākusala niruddhe—etasmiṃ vipassanā vasena pavatte kusale sārajjanādivasena pavatte akusale ca niruddhe.* ''When *kusala* and *akusala* are dissolved-when the *kusala* that exists because of *vipassanā* and the *akusala* that exists because of infatuation and so forth are dissolved.'' See also PED, 216a.
44. Ananda W. P. Guruge, in his article, ''Some Problems in Buddhist Ethics,'' *Añjali*: Papers on Indology and Buddhism, A Felicitation Volume presented to Oliver Hector De Alwis Wijesekera, edited by J. Tilikisiri (Ceylon: The Felicitation Volume Editorial Committee, University of Ceylon, Peradeniya 1970), p. 5, notes the presence

8/3

of the notion *kiriyā-*(or *kriyā-*) *citta* and writes, ''according to the Buddhist concept of emancipation, the ultimate achievement is beyond ethical differentiation or evaluation. Not only is the Arahant considered to be freed of both the good and the evil (cf. *puññpāpapahīṇa*), [Dhp 39] but even his altruistic [*sic*] and otherwise meritorious deeds [*sic*] are said to be accompanied only by a functional consciousness (*kiriyacitta*) incapable of producing any reward or retribution.'' P. D. Premasiri, in his work cited, takes issue with Guruge, and makes his, Premasiri's, point with regard to *kusala* modifying the qualities of an accomplished one in ''Early Buddhism''. However, both Guruge and Premasiri failed to lead us into a further understanding of why the tradition maintained the notion of *kiriyā-citta* as an *avyākatakamma* on the part of the arahant.

45. Dhp 97 and DhpA II 188.
46. One might argue that the phrase ''done is what was to be done'' means that the arahant has gone beyond a sense of duty; duty is now a thing of the past, so also ethics. However, I am beginning to suspect that when this formula is stated it suggests not solely a person's activity that was conducive to liberation, but also, and perhaps primarily, the soteriological instrumentality of the path-process. Note DhpA II 188 (on Dhp 97): *catūhi maggehi kattabbakiccassa katattā*; ''because the duty that is to be done has been done *by means of the four paths*''. The focus would now seem to shift-that which is to be done cannot be done by one alone.

RUPERT GETHIN

9/13

THE FIVE KHANDHAS: THEIR THEATMENT IN THE NIKĀYAS AND EARLY ABHIDHAMMA

The five *khandhas* – *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras, viññāṇa* – clearly constitute one of those primary lists of terms that form the basis of much of Buddhist teaching as presented in the Pali Canon. A major *vagga* of the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* is devoted almost entirely to their treatment,[1] while they also feature repeatedly as categories of analysis in the early *abhidhamma* texts. Yet such accounts of the five *khandhas* as are found in contemporary studies of Indian Buddhism are for the most part of a summary nature, confining themselves to a brief discussion of each of the *khandhas* and the part they play in the breaking down of man into various constituent elements.[2] It does not seem inappropriate in such circumstances to attempt a clearer assessment of the place and understanding of the five *khandhas* in early Buddhist literature.[3]

Although the *khandhas* feature widely in the Pali Canon, they are found most characteristically treated in the *Majjhima-* and *Saṃyutta-nikāyas*, and certain sections of the *abhidhamma* texts. In the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and *Dīghanikāya* they are mentioned really only in passing, while in the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* they feature only sporadically, conspicuous by their absence from the section on "fives".[4] When we begin to consider as a whole the body of *nikāya* material concerned with the *khandhas*, what we find is the sequence of terms *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* being treated according to a number of recurring formulae which are interwoven and applied in various contexts. Out of this there gradually emerges a more or less comprehensive account of the five *khandhas*. It is to a consideration of the principal *khandha* formulae that the greater part of this paper is devoted, while reference is also made to the early *abhidhamma* material where this is found to be of help in consolidating the general understanding of the *khandhas* in early Buddhist thought.[5]

The sequence *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras, viññāṇa* is largely taken as constituting the *nikāyas*. We find very little in terms of formal explanation of either the sequence as a whole or of the individual terms. What there is, is confined to a few stock and somewhat terse definitions.[6] But before turning

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to the *nikāya khandha* formulae, it is perhaps as well to comment briefly on these five basic terms and also, at slightly greater length, on the subject of *khandha* and *upādānakkhandha*.

Rūpa is typically defined as the four elements earth, water, fire and wind, and *rūpa* dependent upon (*upādāya*) them. What is clear, both from the *nikāyas*' elaboration of this by reference to parts of the human body, and from the list of twenty-seven items of *rūpa* distinguished in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* is the extent to which the early Buddhist account of *rūpa* focuses on the physical world as experienced by a sentient being – the terms of reference are decidedly body-endowed-with-consciousness (*saviññāṇaka kāya*).[6] In view of this, the tendency to understand and translate *rūpa* as "matter"[7] is rather misleading. The connotations of the word "matter" in the Western philosophical tradition, its association with concepts such as inert "stuff" or "substance", are hardly appropriate either to the treatment of *rūpa* in the *nikāyas* and early *abhidhamma*, or to *rūpa*'s literal meanings of "form", "shape" or "appearance".

The translation of *vedanā* as "feeling" seems more straightforward, although the *nikāyas*' understanding of *vedanā* is not without its difficulties. It is usually defined as being pleasant (*sukha*), unpleasant (*dukkha*), or not-unpleasant-not-pleasant (*adukkhamasukha*), and is said to be either bodily (*kāyika*) or mental (*cetasika*).[8] The significance of the three kinds of *vedanā* seems to lie in their being seen as three basic reactions to experience which possess a certain potential to influence and govern an individual's subsequent responses in either skilful or unskilful ways.[9]

The stock definition of *saññā* in the *nikāyas* illustrates its function by reference to various colours. It is this, it seems, that has led translators to render *saññā* in the context of the *khandhas* as "perception". Yet, as Alex Wayman has pointed out, there are a number of passages in which the translation "perception" fails to make sense of the *nikāyas*' usage of *saññā* as a technical term. Wayman suggests that it is the word "idea" that should regularly be employed as a translation of *saññā*.[10] This certainly seems to make better sense of the technical usage in connection with the *khandhas*. A *saññā* of, say, "blue" then becomes, not so much a passive awareness of the visual sensation we subsequently agree to call "blue", but rather the active noting of that sensation, and the recognising of it as "blue" – that is, more or less, the idea of "blueness". This appears to be in general how *saññā* is understood in the commentarial literature.[11]

The *nikāyas* define *saṃkhāras* primarily in terms of will or volition (*cetanā*); they also describe them as putting together (*abhisaṃkharonti*) [illegible] the *khandhas* in turn into something that is put-together (*saṃkhata*).[5] [illegible] way *saṃkhāras* are presented as conditioning factors conceived of as [illegible] volitional forces. *Cetanā* is, of course, understood as *kamma* on the [illegible] level,[12] and in the early *abhidhamma* texts all those mental factors [illegible] are considered to be specifically skilful (*kusala*) or unskilful (*akusala*) fall [illegible] within the domain of *saṃkhārakkhandha*.[13] Thus it is that the composition [illegible] *saṃkhārakkhandha* leads[14] the way in determining whether a particular [illegible] arising of consciousness constitutes a skilful or an unskilful *kamma*. All this [illegible] accords well with the *nikāyas*' singling out of *cetanā* as characteristic of the [illegible] three of *saṃkhāras*.

In many *nikāya* passages *viññāṇa* is apparently used generally to characterise the fact of self-awareness of self-consciousness.[15] An interesting [illegible] section of the *Mahāvedalla-sutta* is devoted to a discussion of the nature [illegible] of the relationship between *viññāṇa*, *vedanā* and *saññā*.[16] *Viññāṇa* is here characterised as discriminating (*vijānāti*) the three feelings, *vedanā* as feeling (*vedeti*) the three feelings, and *saññā* as noting (*sañjānāti*) yellow, blue, etc. The passage then goes on to say that these three states (*dhammas*) should be considered closely connected (*saṃsaṭṭha*) since "what one feels, that one notes; what one notes, that one discriminates". Thus *vedanā*, *saññā* and *viññāṇa* are here apparently viewed as operating together as different aspects of the process of being aware of a particular object of consciousness. *Viññāṇa* can perhaps best be characterised as awareness or consciousness of things in relation to each other; this seems to relate both the notion of self awareness and that of discriminating various objects.

Finally we may note how the *khandha-saṃyutta* explains *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* each in terms of six classes corresponding to consciousness that is related to the five senses of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, and sixthly mind[5] – that is, the six internal spheres of sense (*saḷāyatana*).

KHANDHA AND UPĀDĀNAKKHANDHA

Within the *nikāyas* the five terms *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* are variously designated both *khandhas*[17] and *upādānakkhandhas*, and in addition are sometimes treated in sequence without either designation.[18] A *khandha-saṃyutta* passage states that the *khandhas* are to be considered

upādānakkhandhas only when they are with *āsavas* (*sāsava*) and subject to grasping (*upādāniya*).[19] In another passage that recurs several times in the *nikāyas*, the question is asked whether *upādāna* should be considered the same as the *upādānakkhandhas* or whether there is *upādāna* apart from them.[20] In reply it is stated that although *upādāna* is not the same as the five *upādānakkhandhas* there is no *upādāna* apart from them; *upādāna* is then defined as "whatever is will and passion (*chandarāga*) in respect of the five *upādānakkhandhas*". Clearly the *nikāyas* understand *upādāna* as some form of attachment that falls within the general compass of the *khandhas*. The early *abhidhamma* texts clarify *upādāna*'s relationship to the *khandhas* under three principal headings: active grasping (*upādāna*), subject to grasping (*upādāniya*), and the product of grasping (*upādiṇṇa*). *Upādāna* as an active force is confined to *saṃkhārakkhandha*, although all five *khandhas* are potentially the objects of *upādāna* – that is, are *upādāniya*; similarly all five *khandhas* are said to be in some measure the products of *upādāna* – that is, *upādiṇṇa*.[21] By following procedures which are adumbrated in the early *abhidhamma* texts, it is possible to detail further *upādāna*'s relationship to the *khandhas*. The text of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* begins by setting out the triplets and couplets of the *abhidhamma mātikā*, and then by way of explaining the categories of the first triplet goes on to detail the constitution of various arisings of consciousness (*citta*); the categories of the remaining triplets and couplets are explained only in brief. By treating the *cittas* in terms of the categories of the relevant triplets and couplets exactly when and in what measure the three terms *upādāna*, *upādāniya* and *upādiṇṇa* apply to the *khandhas* might be specified in detail. The early *abhidhamma* texts also state that *rūpakkhandha* is always considered to be with *āsavas* and subject to grasping, and that the only time when the four mental *khandhas* are not such – that is, in *nikāya* teminology, are not *upādānakkhandhas* – is on the occasions of the four *ariya* paths and fruits.[22]

Returning to the immediate problem of how exactly early Buddhist thought conceives of *upādāna*, we find that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* by way of explanation of greed (*lobha*) lists a whole series of terms including passion (*rāga*), craving (*taṇhā*) and *upādāna*.[23] It does not appear that these terms are intended to be understood as mere equivalents either in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* or in the *nikāyas*. Within the *nikāyas* each of these terms is characteristically employed in particular contexts with more or less fixed terms of reference. The *khandhas* are not designated the *lobhakkhandhas* or the *taṇhakkhandhas*,

for example. It seems to follow from this that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* intends *rāga*, *taṇhā* and *upādāna* to be understood as particular manifestations of greed in general.

The usage of the term *upādāna* in Pali seems to involve the association of the following range of ideas: "taking up, "grasping", and hence "feeding", ultimately "food", "fuel" and "basis".[24] Since the term *upādāna* is used in such close association with the *khandha* analysis, and since that analysis is used in the *nikāyas* especially as a way of looking at existence and experience on the level of the apparently stable individual being,[25] the notion of *upādāna* and the significance of its relationship to the *khandhas* can, I think, be summed up as follows. As grasping, *upādāna* is that greed which is the fuel or basis for the manifestation and coming together of the *khandhas* in order that they might constitute a given individual or being. This is, of course, exactly the truth of the arising of *dukkha* (see below). But in particular *upādāna* seems to be seen as greed of a degree and intensity that is able to support the reappearance and coming together of the *khandhas* from one existence to the next. To put it another way, if craving has attained to the degree of *upādāna*, then the reappearance of the *khandhas* in the form of an individual being inevitably follows. This tallies quite precisely with *upādāna*'s position in the sequence of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, falling as it does between *vedanā* and *taṇhā*, and before becoming (*bhava*) and birth (*jāti*). Indeed the number of *nikāya khandha* formulae link directly into the *paṭiccasamuppāda* sequence at the point of *upādāna*:

> [illegible] who finds pleasure in *rūpa* . . . *vedanā* . . . *saññā* . . . *saṃkhāras* . . . *viññāṇa*, welcomes them and becomes attached to them, there arises delight (*nandī*); that delight in respect of *rūpa* (etc.) is *upādāna*; for him dependent on *upādāna* there is becoming, dependent on becoming there is birth, dependent on birth there is old age and death – grief, sorrow, lamentation and despair come into being. Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.[26]

To sum up, the term *upādānakkhandha* signifies the general way in which the *khandhas* are bound up with *upādāna*; the simple *khandha*, universally applicable, is used in the *nikāyas* and especially the *abhidhamma* texts as a neutral term, allowing the specific aspects of, for example, *upādāna*'s relationship to the *khandhas* to be elaborated.

THE PRINCIPAL KHANDHA FORMULAE

(i) *The "Totality" Formula*

The totality of each *khandha* is referred to in the *nikāyas* according to the following formula: Whatever *rūpa* . . . *vedanā* . . . *saññā* . . . *saṃkhāras* . . . *viññāṇa* are past, future or present, within or without, gross or subtle, inferior or refined, are far or near.[27] The various terms of this formula are not explained further in the *nikāyas*, but the *Vibhaṅga*, which takes this formula as characteristic of the *suttanta* account of the *khandhas*, furnishes us with an illustration of their application to each of the *khandhas* in turn.[28]

Leaving aside the question of the exact understanding of the nature of time in early Buddhist texts, the collective term past (*atīta*), not-come (*anāgata*), just arisen (*paccuppanna*) is straightforward.

The pair within/without (*ajjhattaṃ/bahiddhā*) is explained as relative, having as its point of reference any given individual: one's own *khandhas* are within, while the *khandhas* of other beings are without. Interestingly, when this pair of terms is thus applied to *rūpakkhandha*, inanimate *rūpa* is left unaccounted for, [29] as is recognised by the commentarial appendix to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, which adds that it should be understood as without.[30] This lack of attention to inanimate *rūpa* further illustrates the way in which the analysis of *rūpa* centres around the sentient being. This orientation is, of course, relevant to the *khandha* analysis as a whole.

As far as their application to the four mental *khandhas* is concerned, the remaining pairs of terms are also explained as relative. That is to say, a particular manifestation of *vedanā*, for example, is distinguished as gross or subtle (*oḷārika/sukhuma*), inferior or refined (*hīna/paṇīta*), far or near (*dure/santike*) in relation to another particular manifestation of *vedanā*. The principles according to which the distinctions between gross and subtle etc. are made involve the discernment of increasing degrees of excellence within the compass of the four mental *khandhas*. For example, although in general not-unpleasant-not-pleasant feeling is said to be subtle when compared to pleasant and unpleasant feeling, pleasant feeling occurring in conjunction with one of the four *ariya* paths or fruits would be subtle in relation to not-unpleasant-not-pleasant feeling occurring in conjunction with the fourth *jhāna* of the form sphere, since the former is without *āsavas* while the latter is with *āsavas*.

As for the application of these pairs of terms to *rūpakkhandha*, although th

inferior/refined pair is again treated as merely relative, the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* and *Vibhaṅga* can be interpreted as taking each part of the two pairs gross/subtle and far/near as referring to fixed items in the *abhidhamma* list of twenty-seven kinds of *rūpa*. Yet, as Karunadasa has pointed out, the *Vibhaṅga* could possibly be read as indicating that the far/near pair could be applied in a number of different ways, and moreover the various ancient schools of *abhidharma* are not consistent in the way they interpret the application of these terms to *rūpa*.[31] One is left with the suspicion that in the case of *rūpakkhandha* too these terms were employed in a number of different ways to indicate the variety to be discerned in *rūpa*. Whether or not the details of the *Vibhaṅga* exposition are accepted as valid for the *nikāyas*, it seems clear that this formula is intended to indicate how each *khandha* is to be seen as a series of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety and a certain hierarchy.

(ii) *The khandhas and the Four Noble Truths*

It has been usual for scholars to explain the *khandhas* as the analysis of the human individual into psycho-physical phenomena. Yet an expression of the *khandhas* in just such terms is not exactly characteristic of the texts. The preferred *nikāya* explanation of the *khandhas* would seem to be in terms of the first of the four noble truths – the *khandhas* are presented as one way of defining what is *dukkha*. The stock *nikāya* statement of the truths explains *dukkha* as "in short the five *upādānakkhandhas*".[32] What is interesting is the way in which various terms are substituted for *dukkha*. For example, we find in the *khandha-saṃyutta*:

> Monks, I teach you, *bhikkhus*, *sakkāya* (the existing body), its arising, its ceasing, and the way leading to its ceasing. And what, *bhikkhus*, is *sakkāya*? The five *upādānakkhandhas* should be said.[33]

The well known "burden" *sutta* is also in principle a variation on the four-truth theme. The burden (*bhāra*) is explained as the five *upādānakkhandhas* in accordance with its standing for *dukkha*, while clinging to the burden (*bhārādāna*) and laying down the burden (*bhāranikkhepana*) are explained according to the standard definitions of the second and third truths respectively. The troublesome taking up of the burden (*bhārahāra*), defined as the person (*puggala*), is inserted between the first and the second truths, while the fourth truth is committed altogether; thus the usual pattern is departed from.[34]

43/3

Another frequently quoted *nikāya* statement that follows the sturcture of the four truths substitutes world (*loka*) for *dukkha*:

> In this fathom-long body endowed with sentience and mind, I declare the world, its arising, its ceasing and the way leading to its ceasing.[35]

In addition, we find *dukkha* as the first truth defined, not in terms of the five *upādānakkhandhas*, but in terms of the six internal spheres of sense (*ajjhattika āyatana*).

Within this general context can be placed the verse attributed to the nun Vajira and referred to in the *Milindapañha*.[37] This states that just as the word "chariot" is applied to what is really a sum of parts, a being (*satta*) is the conventional designation (*sammutī*) for the *khandhas*; there is, in fact, just *dukkha*. A *khandha-saṃyutta* play on the word *satta* finds a hidden significance in this explanation:

> "A being" (*satta*) is said; in what measure is "a being" said? Whatever is will, passion, delight and craving in respect of *rūpa* . . . *vedanā* . . . *saññā* . . . *saṃkhāras* . . . *viññāṇa* is being attached (*satta*) thereto, is being strongly attached (*visatta*) thereto; for this reason "a being" is said.[38]

What begins to emerge, then, is a series of correspondences: *dukkha*, the five *upādānakkhandhas*, *sakkāya*, *bhāra*, *loka*, the six internal *āyatanas*, *satta*. All these expressions apparently represent different ways of characterising the given data of experience or conditioned existence, and are also seen as drawing attention to the structure and the sustaining forces behind it all. In this way the *khandhas* begin to take on something of a wider significance than is perhaps appreciated when they are seen merely as a breaking down of the human individual into constituent parts.

By way of expanding on the theme of the *khandhas* as *dukkha*, a whole series of deisgnations is applied to them both collectively and individually. Most frequent in this respect is the standard sequence of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* (see below). To this a fourth term, *saṃkhata* (conditioned), and also a fifth, *vadhaka* (murderous), are occasionally added.[39] One treatment describes each *khandha* in turn as, in addition to *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*, *roga* (sickness), *gaṇḍa* (a boil), *salla* (a barb), *agha* (misery), *ābādha* (an affliction), *para* (other), *paloka* (unstable), *suñña* (empty).[40] The *khandhas* are also called embers (*kukkuḷa*); they are on fire (*ādittā*); they are Māra, and by grasping them one is bound to Māra.[41] All this acts as vivid illustration of the danger inherent in attachment to the *khandhas*. Images of disease,

bodily affliction and burning abound in the *nikāyas*; the effect in the present context is one of alluding to and drawing together various *nikāya* passages.

Formulae which may be considered as adaptations of the four-noble-truth structure are used to take up the theme of the *khandhas* as *dhammas* that are to be fully understood (*pariññeyya*).[42] Thus ignorance (*avijjā*) is defined as not knowing in turn *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras*, *viññāṇa*, their arising, their ceasing and the way leading to their ceasing; conversely knowledge is knowing all of these.[43] In similar vein is the formula that runs: Thus is *rūpa* (etc.), thus is its arising (*samudaya*), thus is its passing away (*atthagama*). This is one of the most frequently occuring *nikāya khandha* formulae, and is usually found as an explanation of the expression, "he dwells contemplating the rise and fall of the five *upādānakkhandhas*" – an expression used especially in contexts where the process of the gaining of that insight that constitutes the destruction of the *āsavas* is being described.[44]

The theme of the arising and passing away of the *khandhas* is interwoven with the cycle of *khandha-saṃyutta suttas* with that of their pleasure (*assāda*), their danger (*ādīnava*) and the escape from them (*nissaraṇa*); this apparently brings together all the various aspects which make for the full understanding of the nature of the *khandhas*.[45]

(iii) *The anicca-dukkha-anattā Formula*

Perhaps the most well known of the *khandha* formulae is that which demonstrates *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* in turn as *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. In its fullest form this treatment of the *khandhas* is found in the *Vinaya-piṭaka* placed as a second utterance after the Benares discourse on the four noble truths.[46] At its core is a series of questions and answers in the following pattern:

> What do you think, is *rūpa* (etc.) permanent or impermanent? Impermanent. That which is impermanent, is that suffering or happiness? Suffering. Is it right to regard that which is suffering, of a changeable nature, as "This is mine, I am this, this is my self (*attā*)"?
>
> No.

This series of questions and answers, applied to *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa*, occurs regularly throughout the *khandha-saṃyutta* and also elsewhere in the *nikāyas*.[47] Significantly, as a method of demonstrating *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* the formula's use is not confined to the five *khandhas*, but is also applied by the *nikāyas* to a whole series of categories.

In the *Cūḷa-Rāhulovāda-sutta* we find it applied to eye, visible forms, eye-contact and to "what is connected with *vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* and arises dependent upon eye-contact"; ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are all treated in a parallel fashion.[48] The *sutta* thus understands thirty consecutive rehearsals of the formula. The *saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* also employs this formula in respect of a similar list of categories.[49] The *Rāhula-saṃyutta* treats a total of fifty-nine categories in this manner: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; the six corresponding kinds of object; six corresponding classes each of *viññāṇa, samphassa, vedanā, saññā, sañcetanā* and *taṇhā*; six elements (*dhātu*), namely earth, fire, wind, water, consciousness and space; finally the five *khandhas*.[50] Bearing in mind that the six classes of *vedanā, saññā, sañcetanā* and *viññāṇa* are also used to explain the appropriate *khandhas*, it is apparent that the *khandhas* feature widely in this exhaustive treatment apart from their appearance at its close. One is tempted to suggest that this seemingly repetitive list conveys a certain movement from the particular to the more general along the following lines. According to its *nikāya* definition, eye, visible forms and eye-consciousness together constitute eye-contact – similarly for the other senses. Dependent upon sense contact there arises subsequent *vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa*. The significance of the appearance of the *khandha* sequence at the close of the *Rāhula-saṃyutta* list seems to lie in the fact that it is seen as integrating and sythesising what comes before into a whole – a whole that is still, however, *anicca, dukkha* and *anattā*.

(iv) *Attā, anattā and sakkāyadiṭṭhi*

The conclusion that the *anicca-dukkha-anattā* formula focuses upon is that each of the *khandhas* is to be seen by right wisdom as it really is: "This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my *attā*." It is the attainment of this vision that distinguishes the *ariya sāvaka* (noble hearer) from the *assutavant puthujjana* (ignorant ordinary man).[51] A fourfold formula applied to each of the *khandhas* in turn indicates twenty ways in which the *puthujjana* falls short of this vision: he views *rūpa* (etc.) as the *attā*, the *attā* as possessing *rūpa* (etc.), *rūpa* (etc.) as in the *attā*, the *attā* as in *rūpa* (etc.).[52] In both the *nikāyas* and the *abhidhamma* texts these twenty ways of viewing the *attā* in relation to the *khandhas* are used to explain in detail *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* (the view that the body is real).[53] No doubt they are seen as operating at various levels in the psyche of the *puthujjana*, yet that they are seen as having a particular

relevance to notions of the *attā* associated with various meditation attainments is very likely, given the importance of such concerns in the *nikāya* context. Thus a passage that occurs several times in the *nikāyas* treats the four *jhānas* and the first three formless attainments successively, stating that whatever [illegible] is connected with *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* at those [illegible] is to be seen as (amongst other things) *anattā*.[54] This is said to result either in the destruction of the *āsavas*, i.e. arahatship, or in the abandoning of the five lower fetters (*orambhāgiya saṃyojana*), i.e. the attainment of non-returnership. *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is, of course, counted among these five lower fetters.

That the abandoning of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* does not of itself involve the complete destruction of the *āsavas* is a point taken up in a *khandha-saṃyutta* discourse[55] in which the venerable Khemaka is asked by a number of *theras* whether or not he views anything as *attā* or as belonging to the *attā* in respect of the five *upādānakkhandhas*. Khemaka replies that he does not; he is, however, not an *arahat* since the general notion "I am" still persists within the compass of the *khandhas*, although it does not take the form of a specific view, "I am this". He concludes, "when the five lower fetters have been abandoned . . . there remains a residuum of the conceit 'I am', of the desire 'I am', of the tendency 'I am'."

The abandoning of the twenty modes of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is, then, a central element in the transition from *puthujjana* to *ariya sāvaka*. Any sense of individual existence that subsequently persists, is of too subtle a nature to form the basis for a definite view which might identify the *attā* with all five *khandhas* or any one of them.

The formula of the twenty modes of *sakkāyadiṭṭhi* is also employed in the *nikāyas* to explain in detail the statement that, "whatever *samaṇas* or *brāhmaṇas* view the *attā* in diverse ways, they all view the five *upādāna-khandhas* or one of them".[56] In other words, there can be no specific views concerning the *attā* apart from the twenty ways of viewing the *attā* in relation to the five *khandhas*. Now, a number of scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the *nikāyas* fail to categorically deny the *attā* and declare only that the *khandhas* are *anattā*.[57] Yet, when this is taken in the context of the above statement, it must be added that the *nikāyas* refuse to allow the *attā* a meaningful concept apart from the five *khandhas*, that is apart from views or notions of the *attā* that are ultimately to be abandoned. The *attā* in this way squeezed out to the *nikāyas*' ultimate frame of reference,

and deliberately confined to the level of speculations and views. This can be seen, up to a point, as a challenge to those *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* who maintained views concerning the *attā* to explain the exact nature of that *attā*. Their response seems to have been to accuse the Buddha of declaring the destruction of the existing being, or to demand an answer to the question of whether or not the Tathāgata exists after death. The Tathāgata is untraceable (*ananuvejja*), the question of his existence or not after death is unexplained (*avyākata*), was the reply.[58]

(v) *The Arising of dukkha: The khandhas as paṭiccasamuppanna*

Precisely because the *puthujjana* views the *khandhas* as his *attā*, and is attached to them through the workings of "will, passion, delight, craving, and that clinging and grasping which are determinations, biases and tendencies of mind",[59] there arises for him "grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair". The *nikāyas* thus convey a picture of a complete spectrum and network of attachment, and, as indicated above in the course of the discussion of *upādāna*, a number of *khandha* treatments link directly into the *paṭiccasamuppāda* chain. The continued manifestation of the *khandhas* is thus presented as the direct consequence of attachment in respect of the *khandhas*.

In addition to this kind of treatment, which has as its scale a lifetime or a series of lifetimes, a number of *nikāya* passages focus attention on the process of the arising of the *khandhas* in the context of a given sequence of consciousness. A section of the *Mahāhatthipadopamā-sutta* describes the case of one who knows that there is nothing in respect of *rūpa* of which he can say "I" or "mine" or "I am".[60] If he is insulted by others, he knows, "There has arisen for me this unpleasant *vedanā* born of ear-contact; it is caused (*paṭicca*), not uncaused (*appaṭicca*)." He is thus said to see that contact (*phassa*) is *anicca*, that *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* are *anicca*. The *sutta* goes on to state that a manifestation (*pātubhāva*) in any section of consciousness (*viññāṇabhāga*) is to be considered as the result of three conditions, namely that the appropriate bodily organ – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind – is intact (*aparibhinna*), that corresponding external objects – visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles or mental states – come within its range (*āpātha*), and finally that there is an appropriate bringing together (*samannāhāra*).[61] When these conditions are fulfilled "whatever *rūpa* that thus comes into being is included (*saṃgahaṃ gacchati*) in *rūpupādānakkhandha*"; likewise for *vedanā* and *vedanupādānakkhandha*,

and so on. The *sutta* understands all this as illustrating *paṭiccasamuppāda*, and comments that what is causally arisen (*paṭiccasamuppanna*) is the five *upādānakkhandhas*.

This kind of treatment, then, considers the arising of the *khandhas* dependent on any one of the six internal sense spheres. The sequence of terms that thus emerges – (*rūpa*), *phassa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras*, *viññāṇa* – parallels the initial pentad of *dhammas* that the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* lists for the arising of each consciousness, namely *phassa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *cetanā*, *citta*,[62] and invites a certain comparison. The precise nature of the time scale of the consciousness process envisaged by the *nikāya* treatment is ambiguous – perhaps intentionally so, while the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* apparently reduces the scale to its base unit: the individual arising of *citta* at any given time (*samaya*).[63] Yet what is common to both the *suttanta* and *abhidhamma* material here is the concern to consider how the *khandhas* or how *dhammas* stand in relationship to each other, how they are conditioned and sustained within a particular consciousness sequence, however that might be conceived.

THE KHANDHA-VIBHAṄGA

The *khandha-vibhaṅga* is the first of the eighteen chapters that make up the *Vibhaṅga*. It is divided into three sections, the first of which, dealing with the *suttanta* treatment of the *khandhas*, has already been referred to above. The second section, the *abhidhamma-bhājaniya*,[64] involves the analysis of the totality of each of the five *khandhas* in turn according to how each is, in the first place, a whole, and then how each is divisible into two kinds, three kinds, four kinds and so on. This procedure is taken as far as an elevenfold division in the case of *rūpakkhandha*, and as far as a tenfold division in the case of the other *khandhas*, although for the latter the text subsequently goes on to indicate additional ways of sevenfold, twenty-fourfold, thirtyfold and manifold division. The bulk of the section is taken up with the application of the relevant triplets and couplets from the *abhidhamma mātikā* to each of the four mental *khandhas*; this provides a whole series of ways of threefold and twofold division. By taking each applicable triplet with each applicable couplet in turn, according to all possible permutations, the *Vibhaṅga* indicates in the region of one thousand different sets of divisions for each of these four *khandhas* – the precise number varying according to the number of triplets and couplets relevant in each case.

The final section of the *khandha-vibhaṅga*, the *paṅhāpucchaka*, takes the form of a series of questions and answers, again concerned with how the *khandhas* relate to the *abhidhamma* triplets and couplets, and as such forms an extension to the *abhidhamma-bhājaniya* treatment.

The emphasis in the *khandha-vibhaṅga* is once again on the complexity and manifold nature of the *khandhas*. In addition, taken in conjunction with the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* analysis of the various individual arisings of *citta* in terms of the triplets and couplets, the *khandha-vibhaṅga* provides a comprehensive method of classification by which any given conditioned *dhamma* can be classed as *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* or *viññāṇa*, and can be precisely analysed and assessed within the whole scheme of *abhidhamma* and the Buddhist path.

KHANDHA-ĀYATANA-DHĀTU

For the *abhidhamma* texts such as the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, *Vibhaṅga* and *Dhātukathā* the *khandhas* form one of the primary category headings by means of which *dhammas* may be classified. Along with the twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus*, the five *khandhas* constitute a triad among these *abhidhamma* headings in that they represent three different methods of classifying the totality of *dhammas* that make up conditioned existence. However, unlike the *khandhas*, the *āyatanas* and *dhātus* also take into account the unconditioned, *nibbāna*.[65] The other headings employed in the *abhidhamma* texts relate, for the most part, to the more specific aspects of Buddhist spiritual practice, for example the *indriyas*, the limbs of *jhāna* and the eightfold path, and so on.

As an indication of the importance of the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad in early Buddhism, it is worth nothing a phrase repeated several times in the verses of the *Khuddaka-nikāya*: He/she taught me *dhamma* – the *khandhas*, *āyatanas* and *dhātus*.[66] Yet when we turn to the four primary *nikāyas*, although the twelve *āyatanas* and eighteen *dhātus* are specifically mentioned in one or two places,[67] it is significant that the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* fails to provide three corresponding treatments of the *khandhas*, *āyatanas* and *dhātus* as might have been expected. What we do find in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* are the *khandha-saṃyutta* and the *saḷāyatana-saṃyutta* – two exhaustive treatments, each running to some two hundred pages in the PTS editions and each dominating its respective *vagga*. A much slighter *dhātu-saṃyutta*,

found in the second *vagga* (which is dominated by the treatment of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula), in fact concerns itself with the eighteen *dhātus* only briefly at its opening, being for the most part devoted to the treatment of the various other items also sometimes termed *dhātus* in the *nikāyas*.[68] On closer examination the *saḷāyatana-saṃyutta*, for its part, does not strictly constitute a treatment of the twelve *āyatanas*, but seems rather to represent an approach which is relevant to analysis, from the point of view of *abhidhamma*, by both *āyatana* and *dhātu*.

All this suggests that the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad is not standard in quite the same way for the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* as it is for the early *abhidhamma* texts. Whether this is best understood as reflecting a difference in the respective concerns of the *nikāya* and *abhidhamma* texts, or whether it indicates that this triad evolved as standard only after the composition of the bulk of the *nikāya* material, is a question that goes beyond and scope of the present paper. Whatever the case, as A. K. Warder has pointed out,[69] the *khandha-āyatana-dhātu* triad is common to all schools of Buddhism, and is not something confined to the Theravādin *abhidhamma*.

CONCLUSION

To explain the *khandhas* as the Buddhist analysis of man, as has been the tendency of contemporary scholars, may not be incorrect as far as it goes, yet it is to fix upon one facet of the treatment of the *khandhas* at the expense of others. Thus A. B. Keith could write, "By a division which ... has certainly no merit, logical or psychological, the individual is divided into five aggregates or groups."[70] However, the five *khandhas*, as treated in the *nikāyas* and early *abhidhamma*, do not exactly take on the character of a formal theory of the nature of man. The concern is not so much the presentation of an analysis of man as object, but rather the understanding of the nature of conditioned existence from the point of view of the experiencing subject. Thus at the most general level *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* are presented as five aspects of an individual being's experience of the world; each *khandha* is seen as representing a complex class of phenomena that is continuously arising and falling away in response to processes of consciousness based on the six spheres of sense. They thus become the five *upādānakkhandhas*, encompassing both grasping and all that is grasped. As the *upādānakkhandhas* these five classes of states acquire a

momentum, and continue to manifest and come together at the level of individual being from one existence to the next. For any given individual there are, then, only these five *upādānakkhandhas* – they define the limits of his world, they are his world. This subjective orientation of the *khandhas* seems to arise out of the simple fact that, for the *nikāyas*, this is how the world is experienced; that is to say, it is not seen primarily as having metaphysical significance.

Accounts of experience and the phenomena of existence are complex in the early Buddhist texts; the subject is one that is tackled from different angles and perspectives. The treatment of *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa* represents one perspective, the treatment of the six spheres of sense is another.[71] As we have seen, in the *nikāya* formulae the two merge, complementing each other in the task of exposing the complex network of conditions that is, for the *nikāyas*, existence. In the early *abhidhamma* texts *khandha*, *āyatana* and *dhātu* equally become complementary methods of analysing, in detail, the nature of conditioned existence.

The approach adopted above has been to consider the treatment of the five *khandhas* in the *nikāyas* and early *abhidhamma* texts as a more or less coherent whole. This has incidentally revealed something of the underlying structure and dynamic of early Buddhist teaching – an aspect of the texts that has not, it seems, either been clearly appreciated or properly understood, and one that warrants further consideration.

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NOTES

Acknowledgement is due to L. S. Cousins for advice and criticism. Abbreviations of Pali texts are those of *A Critical Pali Dictionary, Epilegomena to Vol. I*, Copenhagen, 1948.

[1] The *Khandha-vagga* (S III): *khandha-saṃyutta*, S III 1–188, followed by the *Rādha-saṃyutta*, S III 188–200, which also treats the *khandhas* in all its *suttas*.

[2] E.g. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist Psychology*, London, 1914, pp. 39–56; A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy in India and Ceylon*, Oxford, 1923, p. 85; E. Conze, *Buddhism – Its Essence and Development*, 2nd pbk ed., Oxford, 1974, p. 14; N. Smart, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*, London, 1964, pp. 42–5; T. O. Ling, *A History of Religion East and West*, London, 1968, pp. 86–7, 131. Fuller discussions seem to be lacking, although some further details may be gleaned from the following: K. Bhattacharya, *L'Ātman-Brahman dans le Bouddhisme Ancien*, Paris, 1973, pp. 109–10, and '*Upadhi*, *upādi* et *upādāna*', *Mélanges d'indianisme à la mémoire de Louis Renou*, Paris, 1968, pp. 81–95; Bhikkhu Bodhi, '*Khandha* and *Upādānakkhandha*', *Pali Buddhist Review*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1976, pp. 91–102; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, passim; E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, Louvain, 1958, passim, and *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, Vol. IV, pp. 1995–2042; A. O. Lovejoy, 'The Buddhist technical terms *upādāna* and *upādisesa*', JAOS, XIX, 1897, pp. 126–36; A. K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 2nd ed., Delhi, 1982, passim.

[3] The principal sources are the four primary *nikāyas* (D, M, S, A) with the first three works of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* (Dhs, Vibh, Dhātuk) taken as representative of the early *abhidhamma*.

[4] Twenty-four M suttas contain some reference to the *khandhas*. They are also mentioned at Vin I 10 (=S V 420) and Vin I 12 (=S III 66), and at D II 35, 301, 305, 307; A. K. Warder, *op. cit.* p. 86, notes that Chinese versions of the (*Mahā-*)*Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* omit the references to the *khandhas*; the *khandhas* are also found in various contexts in the summaries of *nikāya* teaching that constitute the *Saṅgīti-* and *Dasuttara-suttas*: D III 223, 233, 278, 286.

[5] E.g. *khandha-saṃyutta* definitions, S III 59–60, 86–7.

[6] Cf. the following passages: M I 185–90, S III 86, Dhs 134–46.

[7] Taken for granted and left largely unquestioned in Y. Karunadasa's study, *The Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, Colombo, 1967.

[8] M I 303.

[9] See in general the *vedanā-saṃyutta*, especially S IV 209, 231; cf. also C. Gudmunsen, *Wittgenstein and Buddhism*, London, 1977, pp. 12–4.

[10] A. Wayman, 'Regarding the Translation of the Buddhist Technical Terms *saññā/saṃjñā*, *viññāṇa/vijñāna*', *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume*, ed. O. H. de A. Wijesekera, Colombo, 1976, pp. 324–36.

[11] Vism XIV 130; cf. Nyanapoika, *A bhidhamma Studies*, Kandy, 3rd ed. 1971, pp. 68–72.

[12] A III 415.

[13] This is most simply expressed at Dhātuk 9 where the truth of arising and the truth of the path are said to be *saṃkhārakkhandha*; it is elaborated at Dhs 185–225, and at Vibh 63–9 where the various categories of unskilful *dhammas* are treated in terms of the *khandhas*.

[14] Cf. Vism XIV 135.

[15] Cf. S II 94–5, III 9–10, IV 195.

[16] M I 292–3.

[17] The primary meaning of Pali *khandha* (=Skt. *skandha*) would seem to be the trunk of a tree, and then the shoulder or back of a man or an animal. In the Pali Canon the word is also regularly used in a number of expressions in the sense of an accumulation or collection of something, e.g. *bhogakkhandha*, *puññakkhandha*, *dukkhakkhandha*, and often apparently indicative of anything or group of some kind, cf. *sīlakkhandha*, *samādhikkhandha*, *paññakkhandha* (e.g. D I 206).

[18] For the three types of reference: (i) e.g. M I 138, S III 66, Dhs, Vibh, Dhātuk passim; (ii) e.g. D III 233, 278, M III 16, S III 26, 83; (iii) e.g. D II 35. Also to be noted are the occurrences of the forms *rūpadhātu*, *vedanādhātu* etc. (e.g. S III 9), and on one occasion in verse of the sequence *rūpa*, *vedayita*, *saññā*, *viññāṇa*, *saṃkhata* (S I 112), cf. note 34 below.

[19] S III 47.

[20] M I 299 – S III 100–1; cf. S III 166–7.

[21] Four *khandhas* are not *upādāna*, *saṃkhārakkhandha* may or may not be; *rūpakkhandha*

18/3

is *upādāniya*, four *khandhas* may or may not be; all five *khandhas* may or may not be *upādinna*, Vibh 67.

[72] Dhs 196, 246. The *abhidhamma* view that *rūpakkhandha* is always *sāsava*, while the other four may or may not be, seems to be paralleled in a *nikāya* passage which first considers how body (*kāya*) and mind (*citta*) are diseased (*atura*), and then how body is diseased but mind is not, S III 3–5.

[73] Dhs 189.

[74] See *upādāna*, PTS *Pali-English Dictionary* and *A Critical Pali Dictionary*.

[75] This is perhaps most simply summed up in the *nikāya* usage of such expressions as "the manifestation of the *khandhas*" and "the breaking up of the *khandhas*" in part definition of birth and death respectively, usually in the context of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* formula, e.g. M I 49, 50.

[76] S III 14; cf. M I 511, S III 94.

[77] E. g. M I 138–9, III 16–7, S III 47, 68.

[78] The *khandha-vibhaṅga*, *suttanta-bhājaniya*, Vibh 1–12.

[79] Presumably because the terms *ajjhattaṃ* and *bahiddhā* are used in the *nikāyas* in the context of "all *rūpa*" (e.g. M I 138), Karunadasa suggests that the two terms are not being used relatively, as in the *abhidhamma* texts, but rather to establish the dichotomy between "matter that constitutes the body of a living being and the matter that obtains outside of it" (*op. cit.* p. 116), but clearly this dichotomy cannot apply in the cases of *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṃkhāras* and *viññāṇa*.

[80] Dhs 241.

[81] Karunadasa, *op. cit.*, pp. 38–9.

[82] Vin I 10 = S V 420, D II 305, M I 48, S III 158.

[83] S III 159, M I 299.

[84] S III 25; this is to some extent explained if the *sutta* is viewed as an exposition of the accompanying verse – that statements in verse should not always conform to the patterns of *sutta* prose is not surprising.

[85] S I 62, A II 48.

[86] S V 426.

[87] S I 135, Mil 28.

[88] S III 190.

[89] S III 56, 114.

[90] E. g. S III 167–8.

[91] See S III 177, 71, 194, 198, 74.

[92] D III 278, S III 26, Vibh 426.

[93] S III 162–3.

[94] E. g. D. II 35, M III 115, S III 152.

[95] S III 13–5, 27–31, 61–5, 81–2, 160–1, 173–6. Cf. the recurring refrain found in the *Brahmajāla-sutta*: The Tathāgata is freed without grasping "having known as they really are the arising of feelings, their passing away, their pleasure, their danger and the escape from them." D I 17–38, passim.

[96] Vin I 12–3 = S III 66–8.

[97] E. g. S III 56, 88, 104–5, 187–8, M I 138, 232–4, S II 125, 249.

[98] M III 277–80.

[99] S II 244–9.

[100] S III 18–9; cf. S III 16.

[101] E. g. M III 188, 227, S III 3, 16, 96.

[102] M I 300, III 17–8, S III 102, Dhs 182.

[103] M I 436, A V 422, cf. 128.

[104] S III 125–33.

[105] S III 63.

[106] E. g. E. Conze, *op. cit.*, p. 39, and E. J. Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, London, 1933, p. 101, n. 2.

[107] M I 140, S III 119; cf. S III 124, where Māra searches in vain for the consciousness of a *bhikkhu* who has just attained arahatship and then died. The most extensive treatment of this aspect of the *khandhas* is found in the *avyākata-saṃyutta*, S IV 374–403. On this whole question cf. S. Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge, 1982, pp. 117–38.

[108] S III 13, cf. 7, 18.

[109] M I 185–6.

[110] M I 190–1.

[111] Dhs 9.

[112] See Nyanaponika, *op. cit.*, pp. 104–26.

[113] Vibh 12–69.

[114] Dhātuk 9.

[115] Ap 563, cf. 42; Thī 43, 69, 103; cf. Th 1255, Nidd I 45.

[116] E. g. D II 302 (six internal and external *āyatanas*), M III 62 (eighteen *dhātus*).

[117] *Saḷāyatana-saṃyutta*, S IV 1–204; *dhātu-saṃyutta*, S II 140–77.

[118] "The Mātikā", introducory essay to the *Mohavicchedanī*, London, 1961, p. xx.

[119] A. B. Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

[120] As additional ways of analysing the whole of experience, cf. *nāma-rūpa* (e.g. D I 223) and *diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññāta* (e.g. M I 3, 135).

13/3

2. Peṭ 123-4; cf MA I 164-5; ItA II 74; DA-pt. I 265; MA-pt. (cited Nett trsl. p. 324); SA-pt (Be 1961) I 59.
3. Nettī 109-11.
4. Nettī 7.
5. Peṭ 138.
6. e.g. Nettī 65-6.
7. e.g. Nettī 81.
8. Nettī 88-9, 91.
9. Peṭ 249; cf Nettī 101, 125.
0. See for example: VinA 412 foll.; MA II 345; SA I 172 (and AA II 201); SA II 53, 235; III 157 (and VbhA 277; Vism 130); AA II 162; III 219; DhsA 144 (and PaṭisA 522); UdA 153, 196; ItA 104, 170, etc.; II 13, 74; CpA 279, 305-6; PaṭisA 125, 519, 696.
1. MA I 108-9.
2. On these terms see L. S. Cousins "Buddhist Jhāna", *Religion* III, Part 2, 1973.
3. Later tradition sometimes erroneously interprets the word *sukkha* as meaning 'dry'. No doubt this is, however, experientially appropriate-compare PaṭisA 281, which contrasts the roughness and lack of feeling of *vipassanā* with the smoothness and pleasingness of *samatha*.
4. Elsewhere in the Nikāyas the individual who reaches the goal with effort and the one who does so with ease are two kinds of never returner. cf also ItA 51-2.
5. Sn 139 (*deva-yāna*) cf SnA 184; S V 5 (*dhamma-yāna; brahma-yāna*); Th II 389 (*maggaṭṭhaṅgika-yāna*) cf ThA 257 (*ariya-yāna*); cf also D I 215, 220.
6. VbhA 122.
7. Vism 577-8.
8. DhsA 228.
9. VinA 488.
0. DhsA 183-4; cf 215-16; Vism 87; cf AA III 138-9.

PTS editions mentioned in this article and not listed in the GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS are as follows:

CpA	Commentary to Cariyāpiṭaka
Dhs	Dhammasaṅgaṇī
It	Itivuttaka
ItA	Commentary to It
Nd.2	Cullaniddesa
Paṭis	Paṭisambhidāmagga
PaṭisA	Commentary to Paṭis
Peṭ	Peṭakopadesa
PTC	Pali Tipiṭakaṃ Concordance
Pug	Puggalapaññatti
SnA	Commentary to Sn
Th	Theragāthā
ThA	Commentary to Th
UdA	Commentary to Udāna
Vibh	Vibhaṅga
VibhA	Commentary to Vibh

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SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS

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According to Buddhism man is a complex organism of five aggregates or groups of phenomena (*khandha*) enumerated as *rūpa* 'material form', *vedanā* 'feeling', *saññā* 'ideation', *saṅkhāra* 'activity' and *viññāṇa* 'consciousness'. These groups have merged with one another so thoroughly that they cannot be physically separated. Just as a handful of the waters at the confluence of five rivers cannot be identified as the waters of this river or that river these groups defy separate identification. Intricately interwoven as they are these groups of phenomena function with such subtlety and rapidity that man gets the experience of existing as a separate single entity, of being an individual differentiated from the rest of the world. This separate individuality he designates as the I or the self and distinguishes himself from everything else. The experience can be partially illustrated with the help of a modern simile. A man sitting in a fast moving train gets the illusion of being a stationary viewer while the scenery around him is moving fast. Though this is a real experience its illusory nature can be easily understood. But the experience of the I or the self created by the five rapidly moving groups of phenomena (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*) cannot be so easily understood or even suspected. Man identifies himself with them so completely that he imagines himself to be an individual persisting through the passage of time. Therefore he says: I *was* in the past I *am* in the present and I *will be* in the future. The conventional value of this identification for purposes of responsibility and social roles cannot be denied. But the more tenaciously man clings to them and the more thoroughly he identifies himself with them the greater and more grievous the problems he creates for himself. When such tenacious identification becomes fanatical, and the fanaticism becomes widespread in exclusive groups, then dramatic world upheavals take place. History which is a record of human experience is replete with such upheavals.

It needs to be emphasised that these groups cannot be separated from one another and that the problems created by these different modes of self-identification remain knotted in a manner that defies easy solution. But for the purpose of understanding with some degree of clarity the nature of these phenomena with which man identifies himself let us examine them one by one and cite wherever possible associated human problems recorded in history.

Rūpupādānakkhandha—Identification with the group of material phenomena. Buddhism regards matter as a group of phenomena because it consists of the four great elements, the element of extension (*paṭhavī*), cohesion (*āpo*),

eat (*tejo*) and motion (*vāyo*). The body is a conglomeration of all these lements which are always in a state of unrest. Modern science also shows hat the body is an organism consisting of billions of cells which are pertually renewing themselves. But for all practical purposes man identifies imself with the body. For example if a man is asked: who are you?, he says: am so and so. But the name is only a label and that label can be anything. or further identification he produces a photograph with the attested name abel. The photograph is nothing but a picture of his body. When a man says: am tall or short, fat or thin, fair or dark too, he has identified himself vith his body. When he says: I am 40 years old, what he really means is hat he has held his body continuously for such a long period as his self. nother aspect of the identification is expressed when he says: My hands ny face, my body etc., i.e. he regards himself as the possessor of the body. ometimes the body is accepted as the soul which in some mysterious fashion urvives death and various attempts are made by believers of such ideas o preserve the body for later resurrection. Various are funeral rites scattered ll over the world on account of this belief.

The identification with the physical self gets further fortified with the onds of hereditary and cultural groups such as family, caste, class, nation nd race. With these different forms of physical identification one's exlusiveness gets further and further established. At individual level these dentifications generate behaviour varying from extreme arrogance to abject umiliation depending on whether the particular form of identification is ocially esteemed or degraded. The arrogance of Brahmins and inferiority of Caṇḍālas can be cited as examples from the Indian context. At group level it is possible that such identification can lead to solidarity and material prosperity within a given group. But when this identification spills beyond 'an average working level' and becomes fanatical it can create very dangerous situations. History illustrates this point for us very clearly. Group identification engendered solidarity which helped primitive man to emerge from savagery into civilization. But this march from savagery to civilization has been marked with numerous tribal wars, the stronger tribe prevailing upon the weaker. It is only when the narrow limits of the tribes were sacrificed through peaceful, or mostly aggressive, means that the tribes could be united into nations. After the formation of nations, too, nations started vying with one another for power and possessions. Thus history records numerous wars which have inflicted untold misery on thousands, and even millions, of human beings. The insanity of man created by self-identification is so acute that man-slaughter and cruelty inflicted on others by one's own nationals is eulogised as bravery, heroism and patriotism, while similar acts of cruelty committed by the opponent are condemned as tyranny and brutality. The fanaticism at racial level was witnessed in the Nazi movement infamous for its unbelievable crimes of horror and terror. Clear thinking, truly civilized human beings regard racism as a myth, in fact as *Man's Most Dangerous Myth*,[1] but in spite of being only a myth devoid of any reality it has caused an indelible holocaust of stark grim reality. When exclusive self-identification gets coupled with a craving for material possessions, say at national level, they become the fundamental motivational forces of national policies. If such policies are supported by power and military strength devastating war is the natural outcome. History records numerous wars of such nature from all corners of the world. The emperor who marches against the kingdom of another as well as the farmer who encroaches on the neighbour's plot are both motivated by the same delusion of self-identification with material phenomena.

Vedanā upādānakkhandha—Identification with the group of phenomena called feelings.

Feelings are threefold, pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. They have a tendency to produce lust, ill-will and delusion respectively. (*Sukhāya, vedanāya rāgānusāyo anuseti, dukkhāya vedanāya paṭighānusayo anuseti, adukkhamasukhāya vedanāya avijjānusayo anuseti*).[2] These feelings generally divide a man's associates into three groups: beloveds, foes and strangers. Those who generate pleasant feelings are the loved ones, those who generate unpleasant feelings are enemies and those who produce neutral feelings are strangers. The tenacity of the relationship will depend on the intensity of the feelings concerned. When a man says: I love so and so, what he really means is that he is infatuated by the pleasant feelings (born of visual contact, auditory contact, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental contact) generated in himself by the other person. If the generation of pleasant feelings is withheld or obstructed then the same infatuation turns into hatred. When the basis of emotional relationships is such it would be appropriate to examine the case of marriage which is one of the most important relationships where emotions play a prominent role. In a stable marriage the psychological relationship of the two partners goes much beyond the stage of infatuation with feelings. They develop a bond of mutual confidence (*visāsika*) and respect (*sammānana*). Reciprocal duties satisfy each other's needs and the success and beauty of the relationship are dependent on the extent to which the partners have given up self-love, and the extent to which they have made self-interest subservient to the needs of the other. The exemplary couple mentioned in the Pali Canon of such conjugal love is Nakula's parents.[3]

Let us take an instance of the negative emotion of ill-will, *dosa*. Say for instance A scolds B and B generates hatred. B's hatred will be intensified by the extent to which he clings to the scolding as: He scolded me (*akkocchi maṃ avadhi maṃ* etc..).[4] Here B identifies himself with the unpleasant situation and feelings arisen on account of the scolding and continues to generate hatred, reliving the unpleasant situation mentally over and over again. What happens is that the hatred grows far out of proportion to the original situation. According to the *Kāliyakkhinivatthu* of the *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā*,[5] long-lasting inter-species hatred such as that between the cat

and the mouse, the owl and the crow, also grows out of such psychological ruminations. When the ethos or the pride of a group of people, be it a tribe, nation or a race is hurt, it can develop group hatred which will spill out long lasting adverse effects. History is replete with such examples, but the case of the Jews is a classic example. Persons who fail to evoke any effective response remain in the category of strangers. Because we are ignorant about them and we have our self-interest to safeguard, our response to the unknown persons is often prejudiced with suspicion and uncertainty. The enlightened being who has risen above the confines of these affect-limitations starts radiating loving friendliness or *mettā* which knows no barrier, no restriction. This unbounded loving friendliness is radiated on one and all like the sun radiating warmth and effulgence on all alike.

Saññā upādānakkandha—Identification with the group of phenomena called ideation.

The *Mahāvedallasutta*[6] defines *saññā* as *nilakam pi sañjānāti pitakam pi sañjānāti* etc., and literally it would mean that *saññā* is the perception of colours. Here what it really means is the ability with which we relate present sense stimuli with past experience and *recognise* sense data. *Saññā* also means symbol and when symbols are arranged in a systematic order ideas are born. Therefore *saññā upādānakkhandha* finally comes to mean ideological identification. Man identifies himself with the ideologies he holds and calls himself a democrat, a socialist, a physicist, biologist, anthropologist, materialist etc. With this identification he looks at the outside world from his point of view only. If the identification is fanatically tenacious he will go to the extent of upholding his point of view as the only truth and denounce all else as false (*idam eva saccam moghaṃ aññaṃ*),[7] like the blind men and the elephant in the traditional simile.[8]

Let us take into consideration the present world political situation and see how ideological identification is ruling the entire scene. The world is divided into three main ideological power blocs: (a) the capitalist group headed by the U.S.A., Britain, France and West Germany; (b) the socialist bloc headed by the Soviet Union (with China preaching and practising another brand of socialism); and (c) the third world consisting of the developing nations. These developing nations are continually wooed, coerced and even intimidated into subscribing to the ideologies of the main power blocs. To maintain the prestige, superiority and the military strength of their ideological systems each power bloc is manufacturing more and more deadly weapons and the whole world is precariously hoisted on a balance of terror. Each side is trying to demonstrate its ideological superiority by what they call higher and better living standards. What in reality has happened is that greeds are recognised as needs and all efforts are expended to satisfy these greed-needs. But sober men have now started asking the sane question whether the quality of life has really improved in spite of the high affluent standards of living achieved.

The identification of oneself with any ideology tends to make one blind with regard to the weak points in one's own accepted ideology and the strong points in the opponent's views. No objective assessment of the merits and demerits of any set of ideas becomes possible if one identifies oneself with any ideology.

History illustrates beautifully how man has continued his ideological identification changing faces through the changing phases in history. There was a time when imperialism or empire building was the accepted ideological order of the day and every powerful nation tried to build an empire however far-flung it was. Empire building was not only prestigious, it was even considered morally right if one had the power and the means to build one. Euphemistically, the attempt was further justified in the name of civilizing the uncivilized. Hand in hand with imperial conquest went religious conquest using military force educational research and even material coercion with the avowed noble ideological zeal of saving the souls of otherwise damned pagans. The activities of imposing one's own accepted views, whether political or religious at sword-point, pen-point and penny-point gradually abated with the ideological enlightenment which came about as a result of the recognition of human rights. Moral consciousness of man underwent change and empire building came to be viewed as robbing the rights of other less fortunate nations. When world public opinion changed thus and the colonies started asserting themselves, the emperors were obliged to grant independence to their colonies and history witnessed epochmaking world-wide changes. But man has still not learnt that ideological identification has been a root cause of political miseries throughout the length and breadth of human history. For, at present, too, mankind is divided into separate camps, each holding fast to its committed views, suspecting and denouncing the other as the cause of international political unrest. In the name of establishing world peace, and in the name of solving the world-wide problems of starvation, malnutrition, unemployment, illiteracy etc., etc. each power bloc is asserting its own ideological dogma. In the process of defending its system and imposing it on the neutrals, each side is piling up nuclear weapons deadlier than ever heard of before. Unless and until man realises not only the folly, but also the imminent danger of ideological identification, man on this planet will literally continue to sit on a time bomb.

Saṅkhāra upādānakkhandha—Identification with the group of phenomena called activities.

Man identifies himself with his physical, verbal and mental activities as the doer, the speaker and the thinker. In the modern competitive world this identification plays a significant role in social life. The success-orientation in man makes him so ambitious that he not only tries to do his best in whatever he does, he even tries to outdo his neighbour. He has created an affluent image of himself and has learnt to measure success in terms of his acquisitions such as house and property, automobiles, wealth, travels

in foreign countries etc., which are the socially esteemed criteria for measurement of success. For the acquisition of these he must perform not only at maximum efficiency, but even better than his competitors. In this rat race he suffers sorely with complexes of superiority, inferiority and equality when he compares himself in activity with others. Elation with self-importance (*attukkaṃsana*) and degradation of others (*paravambhana*) is the outcome of the superiority complex. Hypocritical behaviour and abuse of others is the result of the inferiority complex. The desperate attempt to maintain standards is a sign of the notion of equality.

The modern competition and the struggle to survive in an environment with few employment opportunities makes man extremely selfish with no concern or sympathy for the other. This trend has even encroached on the world of sports today and the spirit of sportsmanship is getting sacrificed in the feverish mania for breaking records. This has actually defeated the very purpose of sports and games, namely enjoyment, relaxation and the display of talent and skill in an atmosphere of friendship and fairplay. The net result is that man is left exhausted and worn-out, his nerves being strained to the point of being unable to enjoy sound sleep. Modern man consumes tranquillisers by thousands of tons and their manufacture is a thriving industry. Drug addiction and alcoholism are two other related evils that harassed modern man has succumbed to. These are grave human problems the world faces today and they are, in the last analysis, really problems of self-identification.

From the Buddhist point of view the entire philosophy of competition is at fault. *Jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati, dukkhaṃ seti parājito*,[9] 'victory breeds jealousy and unhappy lies the vanquished', says the Buddha. Competition is thus double-edged, cutting both the victor and the victim. Co-operation and not competition is the Buddhist attitude to right living which brings harmony and happiness to one and all. This becomes possible only to the extent to which man has given up identification with activities as: my work, my performance, my position, my record etc., and to the extent to which he desists from making comparisons of superiority, inferiority and equality with others.

The world of flowers is so beautiful because there is no competition among flowers to outdo one another. Each blooms according to its capacity adding unique beauty to its environment during the short span of its life. Man has a great lesson to learn even from the most humble wild flower.

Viññāṇa upādānakkhandha—Identification with the group of phenomena called consciousness.

Buddhist texts explain *viññāṇa* as eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mind-consciousness.[10] In short it means consciousness of sense experience. But man is ignorant of the mechanism of sense experience and he posits an entity who enjoys or suffers these experiences. Therefore he says: I see, I hear, I smell, I taste, I touch and I think. According to Buddhism sense experience is a chain of rapid events, a process consisting of changing phenomena. Analysis shows that it is impossible to find an agent called I or self at any point in this process. According to modern physiology sense experience is a complicated process comprising activities at the level of the sense organs and at brain centres, the two ends being connected by an extremely complex network of afferent and efferent nerve fibres. Modern physiology has examined only the physical aspect of sense experience whereas Buddhism goes much further to explore the psychological processes as well.

The gravest danger of identification with sense experience involves a dimension which is not usually accepted by the world at large. It is the saṃsāric dimension which has *karma* as the propelling force. So long as man identifies himself with the working of his sense faculties he will continue to produce more and more births for himself in this cycle of saṃsāric existence. Man has to understand experientially, not just theoretically, rationally or intellectually, the subtle physical and psychological processes involved in sense experience if he wishes to retire from the misery of the ever recurring process of life and death.

Thus analysis shows that man is a complex bundle of different modes of identification and he is under the delusion of being a separate individual designated as the I, self, ego or soul. The more this individual self is asserted, the more tensed and strained social relations become. Society is like a fabric which is continually woven and embroidered by the dynamic threads of human beings. The strength of the fabric woven, the beauty of the pattern embroidered and the quality of the finished product depend on the unity, harmony and the character of the individual threads. However great or however weak, each human thread has a unique contribution to make, and what is more he has a right to make that contribution. If, however, an individual or group of individuals are so self-centred as to work their way at the expense of others, the social fabric weakens and the pattern of culture loses much of its aesthetic value and spiritual quality. Therefore it is the duty of each individual to make his contribution with due sensitivity and appreciation of the rights of others without losing sight of the welfare of mankind as a whole.

By way of conclusion it is worthy of note that Buddhism never spoke of human rights, but always emphasised the duty of individuals. As a matter of fact neither Pali nor Sanskrit has a single word for 'right' in the sense of claim or privilege. What is more the same word *dharma* which expresses the ideas of righteousness, truth and even cosmic law is also used to express the idea of duty. The discharge of one's duty constitutes righteous living and is a preliminary to the realisation of truth. Buddhism shows that unity and harmony prevail in society when duties are emphasised, for, the rights of one individual get automatically fulfilled when the duties of the other are discharged. Thus each one has an obligation by the other and this attitude

23/3

plays down ego-centricity. On the other hand an atmosphere of competition, strife and contention is more likely to arise if each one is wont to assert his or her own rights. The deviation of present day social values from the pattern set by ancient wisdom is perhaps revealed by the semantic coincidence of the English word 'right'. It means true, correct, just as well as claim, and it seems to betrary an underlying philosophy which emphasises the importance of the individual or the self. To summarise it rather bluntly, it appears that an action may be deemed right (i.e. correct or just) if the individual right (just claim) is satisfied. According to Indian linguistic concepts truth, justice and duty coincide in terminology—an action was considered right and just (*dharma*) if duty (*dharma*) was discharged. Deemphasis of individual claims and the duty-orientation of social relationships are the Buddhist methods of achieving social harmony and human progress.

NOTES

1. M. F. Asbley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth*, Cleveland, World Publishing Co. 1945.
2. *Majjhimanikāya*, P.T.S. ed. vol. I, p. 303.
3. *Aṅguttaranikāya*, P.T.S. ed. vol. I, p. 26; vol. II, p. 61.
4. *Dhammapada* v. 3.
5. *Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā*, P.T.S. ed. vol. I. p. 37.
6. *Majjhimanikāya*, P.T.S. ed. vol. I, p. 293.
7. *Dīghanikāya*, P.T.S. ed. vol. I. p. 187.

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TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF SADDHĀ AND BHAKTI

GATARE DHAMMAPALA

It seems that the words *saddhā* and *bhakti* are very often used as synonyms irrespective of their special connotations. The word *bhakti* generally means devotion or love towards God or a spiritual teacher though it has the original meaning of secular love and affection. The verbal root of the term *bhakti* in Sanskrit being √ *bhaj* means to deal out, apportion, divide, share and allot to. As Mariasuai Dhavamony elucidates it, the concept of love includes many aspects, dealing with the varied manifestations of love, such as (a) possession and enjoyment, (b) preference and choice, (c) esteem and honour, (d) attachment and affection, (e) loyalty and devotion.[1]

Though the word *bhakti* is considered a common religious technical term used to express the devotion or love fixed upon a god or a religious leader, as far as religious history is concerned, its special connotation can be found first in the *Bhāgavata* religion. *Bhagavat* and *Bhāgavata*, kindred words with *bhakti*, are also derived from the same root *bhaj*. While the first denotes the Lord or the Adorable one, the latter means a person who worships him. It is of note that the word *bhagavā* (P) the corresponding Sanskrit of which is *bhagavat*, can often be found in the Pali Canon as an epithet of the Buddha. But its definition as explained by the commentators seems to have differed from the Sanskrit form, concerned with the *Bhāgavata* cult.[2] Nevertheless, no one can gainsay the similarity between those words, *bhaj* being the verbal root. It must be emphasized in this respect that the word *bhāgavata* is not employed anywhere in Pali Buddhist literature in order to signify the worshippers of the Buddha. Now it is obvious that the term *bhakti*, as its etymological meaning itself implies, connotes the love or the devotional faith towards the *Bhagavat* as a means of salvation from the circle of rebirth. It was considered the only way of mystical realization and communion with God. As Grierson has described it, the *bhakthimārga* or *bhakti* path is introduced in opposition to the *karmamārga* or works path and the *jñānamārga* or knowledge path.[3]

In the *Bhāgavata* religion, faith (*śraddhā*), worship, sacrifice and meditation are considered inferior to *bhakti*. For instance, according to the teachings of the *bhakti* cult, faith is described as merely a subsidiary preliminary to *bhakti*. It forms only a part of all Godward relations.[4] Being superior to *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* (meditation), *bhakti* forms the principal element in religion. Its formal effect is to make one abide steadily in God. Though *jñāna* may produce *bhakti*, the latter differs from the former. In the opinion of Sāṇḍilya, *bhakti* is the terminus. It is impossible to know by *bhakti* but only to recognize, and recognition implies previous knowledge.[5]

[illegible] devotion [illegible] who was also [illegible]

24/3

SAMATHA-YĀNA AND VIPASSANĀ-YĀNA

L. S. COUSINS

Asked about *samatha* (calm) and *vipassanā* (insight) meditation, a well-known contemporary Thai meditation teacher commented at the end of his reply:

"These days many people cling to the words. They call their practice *vipassanā*. *Samatha* is looked down on. Or they call their practice *samatha*. It is essential to do *samatha* before *vipassanā*, they say."[1]

This summarizes quite exactly a debate which is frequently encountered in Thailand and, using a slightly different terminology, in Sri Lanka also.

It seemed therefore useful to re-examine the use of these two terms in the earlier Pali literature, hoping to see exactly how ancient this kind of usage is and whether there is any clear position on the matter in the classical texts.

For the purposes of this investigation I shall treat the earliest stratum of Pali literature as consisting of the Vinaya texts (excluding the Parivāra), the first four Nikāyas and the Sutta-Nipāta. It is, of course, obvious that there is some historical stratification within these works. However, I do not accept that there are adequate criteria available for a convincing analysis into distinct periods. Nor is sufficient historical information available to determine the likely time-scale for such periods.[2]

The earlier literature

First of all we must notice some senses of the word *samatha*, which do not concern us here. In many passages it is used rather generally and must be rendered in its ordinary meaning of peace or calm. Occasionally it is difficult to tell whether a more technical sense is intended. Related to this general usage is its use as a Vinaya term in the list of the seven rules for the appeasement of issues (*adhikaraṇa-samatha*).[3]

More significant is the use of *samatha* as a synonym for *nibbāna*. This occurs in two main contexts. Quite frequent is the 'calming of all activities' (*sabba-saṅkhāra-samatha*).[4] Twice also we find the passage:

"(himself) awakened the Lord teaches Dhamma for awakening, (self-) mastered the Lord teaches Dhamma for (self-) mastery, (himself) at peace the Lord teaches Dhamma for peace (*samatha*)...."[5]

Our main concern, however, is with the use of *samatha* as equivalent to *samādhi* and of *vipassanā* as equivalent to *paññā*. Not surprisingly this generally falls into the context of descriptions of the Buddhist path. Sometimes we find the two terms as part of a sequence outlining the stages of the path in general. Or sometimes they occur in descriptions of the Fourth

Noble Truth or its expansion in the grouping of seven lists known later as the *bodhi-pakkhiya-dhammas*. Before examining the main formulae I will turn first to certain aspects of the standard accounts of the path in the Nikāyas. These will provide some background to the use of *samatha* and *vipassanā*.

The structure of the path

Among the most elaborate accounts of the path found in the Pali Canon are those found in the Sīlakkhandha. In fact it is perhaps more correct to speak of a single account, repeated with slight modifications in many of the *suttas* of this first third of the Dīgha-nikāya. Since the main changes are to the way in which the path as a whole is structured, it seems to me that this is mainly a question of 'ringing the changes' to prevent too rigid a view of the stages of the path. For the present purpose we need not take account of the arrangements which divide the path into two (e.g. *caraṇa|vijjā; sīla|paññā*), nor of those which do not make any division at all. Our concern is with those which divide into three-notably the Subha-sutta, which divides into *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* and the Kassapa-sīhanāda-sutta, which gives *sīla-sampadā*, *citta-sampadā* and *paññā-sampadā*.

By the end of the Nikāya period, if not earlier, this three-fold structure had been applied to the stages of the *ariya* path.[6] In this application, the stream-enterer has fulfilled the *sīlas*, the never-returner has mastered *samādhi*, while the *arahat* has mastered *paññā*. Of course this is only new as a specific structure. The stream-enterer is frequently seen in terms of perfecting the precepts—hence his non-rebirth in an inferior destiny such as would be the consequence of breach of the precepts. The never-returner does not return precisely because he has freed himself from attachment to the sense sphere—he is reborn in the Brahma realm. In this he is parallel to the *jhāna* attainer except that his achievement is permanent. The association of arahat-ship with superior wisdom is, of course, obvious.

This might be better expressed by saying that all *ariya* disciples have mastered the precepts; the never-returner has mastered both *sīla* and *samādhi*; while the arahat has mastered wisdom as well. This corresponds quite closely to the structure of the Buddhist cosmos. One is reborn as a deva through generosity and keeping the precepts, as a brahma through developing *samādhi* and in the Pure Abodes by developing wisdom. Quite logically all brahmas are also devas but not vice versa, while all those resident in the Pure Abodes are both devas and brahmas.

This may be termed the *vertical structure* of the path. An alternative view becomes very important in the Abhidhamma. The whole of the path is seen as arising together in unity at the moment of attainment. This we will call the *horizontal structure*. It is applied, for example, to the *bodhi-pakkhiya-dhammas* in relation to each of the four paths (*magga*). On a lesser level it is applied to the five faculties (*indriya*) in relation to *jhāna*

Finally we must note that some of these canonical sequences function as if they were *sliding scales*. In the present case Buddhaghosa, following other canonical models, applies the series *sīla*>*samādhi*>*paññā* not to the path from its beginning up to arahatship, but instead to the path up to stream-entry.[1] Indeed both the horizontal and the vertical structures can be utilized in this way. So, for the commentarial tradition, the stage of powerful insight prior to stream-entry is as much the level of the ordinary (*lokiya*) *bodhi-pakkhiya-dhammas* as of insight in the prior stage (*pubbabhāga*). In other words, on the larger (i.e. *ariya*) scale the vertical structure of the path extending over a period of time tends to culminate in the path moment with the horizontal structure. On the smaller scale it equally tends to culminate in strong insight with a similar horizontal structure.

Obviously these three approaches involve a measure of surface incompatibility. Any attempt to reconcile them would require a fairly sophisticated system. No doubt one could be devised. Perhaps more to the point is the type of function which is fulfilled by this sort of 'over-determination'. It gives a sense of multiple dimensions to the Dhamma and a feeling of its intricate and harmonious balance. This after all is the teaching which is 'beautiful in its beginning, beautiful in its middle, beautiful in its ending'.

Samatha and vipassanā

The main uses of the two terms *samatha* and *vipassanā* in the Nikāya literature are precisely within these path structures. We find them, for example, in sequences setting out the vertical structure of the path. Some examples may make this clear. One passage runs:

> "....he should be one who performs fully in respect of precepts (*sīla*), devoted to peace (*samatha*) of mind within, not having rejected *jhāna*, endowed with insight (*vipassanā*), one who increases empty houses".[7]

Here the succession is: *sīla*>*samatha*>*vipassanā* with *jhāna* apparently identified with *samatha* and 'empty houses' following *vipassanā*, perhaps soon as related to *aññatā*.

Another passage refers to right view as resulting in liberation of heart (*ceto-vimutti*) and having the advantage of resulting in liberation of heart, resulting in liberation of understanding (*paññā-vimutti*) and having the advantage of resulting in liberation of understanding, when accompanied by five factors.[8] The five are in the sequence: *sīla*>learning (*suta*)>discussion >*samatha*>*vipassanā*. Elsewhere we find the series: faithful>possessing *sīla* >one who obtains peace of mind within>one who obtains insight into Dhamma through higher wisdom.[9]

In numerous passages *samatha* and *vipassanā* are clearly identified either with the eightfold path or with the fourth noble truth. Sometimes this is explicit. Sometimes it is intended by the use of some form of the causative of *bhavati* i.e. 'bringing into being' (*bhāvanā*)—the function of the fourth noble truth.[10] No doubt such a use is intended also in most of those cases in which the two occur with little explanation or context.[11] In a few passages there is some connection with either the *ariya* disciple or the transcendent (*lokuttara*) mind.[12] Presumably this is because the stream-enterer has already mastered the precepts; so he has only to develop *samādhi* and *paññā*.[12]

Identification of the two terms with *samādhi* and *paññā* in the context of the horizontal structure of the path is less frequent in the Nikāyas. In one verse passage the five *indriyas* are given as: faith, mindfulness, strength, *samatha* and *vipassanā*.[13] Of course such an identification is standard in the Abhidhamma texts where *samatha* is included in the register for *samādhi* and *vipassanā* is given in that for *paññā*.[14]

The two contrasted

In a few places the two are differentiated more specifically. At A I 61 we find that development of *samatha* leads to developing *citta*, which leads to the abandoning of desire (*rāga*) by means of liberation of heart. Development of *vipassanā* by contrast leads to developing wisdom and then to the abandoning of ignorance and liberation of understanding. The two are referred to as *dhammas* connected with knowledge (*vijjābhāgiya*). At A II 140 we learn that there is a time for hearing Dhamma, a time for Dhamma discussion, a time for *samatha* and a time for *vipassanā*. If each of these is practised from time to time, arahatship will surely be reached—just as rain which falls on the mountains goes stage by stage to the ocean. We may note also that at A III 449 development of *samatha* is seen as overcoming excitement (*uddhacca*).

Several passages contrast the one who obtains peace of mind with the one who obtains insight into Dhamma through higher wisdom.[15] Interestingly both are required. Whichever of the two is lacking should be developed. The individual who already obtains both should make effort (*yoga*) to obtain arahatship. This last suggests that the Puggalapaññatti is correct in interpreting inner peace of mind as *jhāna* and Dhamma insight through higher wisdom as the transcendent paths and fruits.

Perhaps more significant for later interpretation is the declaration of Ānanda (A II 157). This must be given in full:

> "Sirs, whatever bhikkhu or bhikkhunī declares in my presence the attainment of arahatship, does so in four ways or by one of the four. By which four?
>
> (a) Here, sirs, a bhikkhu brings into being (*bhāveti*) insight preceded by peace. As he is bringing into being insight preceded by peace, the path (*magga*) is born to him. He practises, brings into being and makes much of that path. When he practises, brings into being and makes much of that path, his fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies (*anusaya*) are destroyed.

26/3

(b) Again, sirs, a bhikkhu brings into being peace preceded by insight. As he is bringing into being peace preceded by insight, the path is born to him. He practises, brings into being and makes much of that path. When he practises, brings into being and makes much of that path, his fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies are destroyed.

(c) Again, sirs, a bhikkhu brings into being peace and insight yoked as a pair. As he is bringing into being peace and insight yoked as a pair, the path is born to him. He practises, brings into being and makes much of that path. When he practises, brings into being and makes much of that path, his fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies are destroyed.

(d) Again, sirs, the mind of a bhikkhu is gripped by Dhamma excitement. On the occasion, sirs, when the mind stabilizes within, settles down, becomes one-pointed and enters concentration (*samādhiyati*), the path is born to him. He practises, brings into being and makes much of that path. When he practises, brings into being and makes much of that path, his fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies are destroyed. Sirs, whatever, bhikkhu or bhikkhunī declares in my presence the attainment of arahatship, does so in these four ways or by one of them."

The later canonical texts

The Paṭisambhidāmagga quotes this *sutta* in full and comments upon it.[16] Significantly it is included in the Yuganandha-vagga—the section concerned with transcendent *dhammas* 'yoked as a pair'. The Paṭisambhidāmagga is an *ekābhisamaya* work, which lays great stress on the unity, harmony and balance of the path at every level. Naturally this emphasis affects its interpretation of this *sutta*, particularly in regard to the third alternative.

In the first of the four ways *samatha* is explained as one-pointedness of mind, non-distraction, concentration due to freedom from sensuality (*nekkhamma*). *Vipassanā* is seen as contemplating as impermanent, suffering and without self the *dhammas* arisen in that peaceful state. In the second way *vipassanā* is contemplating as impermanent, suffering and without self, while *samatha* is one-pointedness of mind, non-distraction, concentration based upon the relinquishing of the *dhammas* arisen in that contemplation. More exactly, a state which has as its object or support (*ārammaṇa*) such a relinquishing leads to concentration i.e. peace. The commentary interprets this as referring to *nibbedha-bhāgiya-samādhi*, the concentration associated with powerful insight leading to the path. The Aṅguttara Commentary sees it as the case of one who naturally obtains insight.[17]

With the third alternative the Paṭisambhidāmagga goes its own way. As the commentary points out, it concentrates upon the actual path moment itself as exemplifying the perfect unity of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Of course the *sutta* itself was really more concerned with the process by which that moment is reached. So the Aṅguttara Commentary rightly interprets the

third way as the case in which someone attains successive levels of *samatha* (i.e. *jhāna*), applying insight to each one before developing the next.

The Paṭisambhidāmagga explanation is crucial in the fourth case. Without it the passage would not really be explicable. It explains that while paying attention to the aggregates, elements, bases and so on as manifesting impermanence, etc., there arises one of ten *dhammas*. These are then listed. This is the earliest occurrence of the list so important in later tradition, of the ten defilements of insight. (Here the order differs slightly from later versions.) In fact the list is formed from the usual materials descriptive of the path. Indeed, of the seven *bojjhaṅgas* only *samādhi* is absent. This is not perhaps surprising, since *samādhi* is the opposite of excitement (*uddhacca*), even so, it is replaced by two terms of closely related usage: happiness (*sukha*) and commitment (*adhimokkha*). The two remaining terms are radiance (*obhāsa*) and *nikantī* (attachment to the prior state), first and last in the list respectively.[18]

The point of the Paṭisambhidāmagga explanation is clear. States similar to those of *bodhi* itself are reached, but become the cause of excitement. This obstructs the clarity and onward development of insight. The commentary interprets this fourth way as that of the pure insight follower (*sukkhā-vipassaka*).[18] This seems very plausible in view of the emphasis on the mind settling down and becoming concentrated which follows.

Passing over some other references in the Paṭisambhidāmagga, in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka and in the Mahāniddesa,[19] it seems worthwhile to take note of one particular passage in the last of these. Commenting on the lines:

"There are no bonds for one detached from conceiving. There are no delusions for one freed by wisdom." (Sn 847)

the Mahāniddesa explains the first line as referring to one who develops the *ariya* path preceded by *samatha*; from the very beginning his bonds (*gantha*) are suppressed. The second line is taken to refer to one who develops the *ariya* path preceded by *vipassanā*; from the very beginning his delusions are suppressed.[20]

The semi-canonical works

The inclusion of *samatha* and *vipassanā* in the *suttantika* couplets of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī perhaps indicates that they were already considered an important part of *suttanta* teaching. Yet it is only in the semicanonical works—the older Peṭakopadesa and the influential Nettipakaraṇa that we find them playing a really major role.

In these works the path is considered from the standpoint of various methods (*naya*). The first of these, the *nandiyāvatta* method, views the way as composed of *samatha* and *vipassanā*, overcoming craving and ignorance respectively.[21] This is then the basis for an intricate set of relationships, potentially involving almost everything in Buddhist teaching which can be

traditions in the ancient literature saw the path

meditation master who was cited initially

expressed in pairs. Indeed by this method almost anything in Buddhist teaching could be expressed as a pair! Some examples may be of interest.

Samatha is explained as the medicine for craving, bringing freedom from sickness by liberation of heart, while *vipassanā* is the medicine for the sickness of ignorance, bringing freedom from sickness in liberation of understanding.[22] One developing *samatha* (fourth noble truth), comprehends matter (first truth), abandons craving (second truth) and realizes liberation of heart (third truth). One developing *vipassanā* (fourth truth), comprehends the immaterial (first truth), abandons ignorance (second truth) and realizes liberation of understanding (third truth).

Or, those whose character-type is prone to views (*diṭṭhicarita*), due to the hindrance of ignorance, may incline to the extreme of practising self-mortification or tend to the annihilationist view. One whose character-type is prone to craving may incline to the extreme of practising sensual enjoyment or tend to the eternalist view.[23] The former will practise *samatha* preceded by *vipassanā* abandon ignorance and attain liberation of understanding. The latter will practise *vipassanā* preceded by *samatha*, abandon craving and attain liberation of heart.[24]

Many other such classifications and groupings are offered in these two works. The five hindrances,[25] the five faculties,[26] the eightfold path,[27] conditioned origination,[27a] factors of *samādhi*,[28] the *kasiṇāyatanas*,[28a] etc.—all are similarly analysed. Indeed such divisions are precisely the *nandīvatta* method.

Moreover, since the different methods are intricately connected, others may also involve *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Let us take the case of the triple lotus method: threefold analysis of the path. Here we find training in higher morality recommended for one who learns only by detailed explanation; he will develop peace and insight yoked as a pair. Training in higher consciousness (*adhicitta*) is for one who needs guiding; he will develop peace preceded by insight. Training in higher wisdom is for one who can learn from a brief explanation; he will develop insight preceded by peace.[29]

The commentarial literature

The terms *samatha* and *vipassanā* occur quite frequently in the *aṭṭhakathā* literature. A detailed study of all the references which are found would be beyond the scope of this article.[30] We will confine ourselves here to usages closely related to descriptions of the stages of the path.

Before looking generally at the works attributed to Buddhaghosa, it seems worthwhile to translate one important passage from the Commentary to the Majjhima-nikāya.[31] This is introduced in a way which suggests it has been taken as a whole from earlier sources, almost certainly the old commentaries of the Mahāvihāra. No doubt this is true of the bulk of Buddhaghosa's writings, but it is only in such cases as this that we can be fairly sure that we are dealing with an earlier stratum unmixed with later material. The subject of this passage is given as 'the method of bringing into being (*bhāvanā-naya*)':

"Some bring into being insight preceded by peace. Others bring into being peace preceded by insight. How?

In regard to this someone first arouses access concentration or absorption concentration.[32] This is peace. He brings into being insight into that and into its conjoined states, which sees them as impermanent and so on. This is insight. So peace is first, afterwards insight. Therefore it is referred to as bringing into being insight preceded by peace. As he is bringing into being insight preceded by peace, the path (*magga*) is born to him. He practises, brings into being and makes much of that path. When he practises, brings into being and makes much of that path, his fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies are destroyed—in this way he brings into being insight preceded by peace.

But in this regard someone, even without having aroused peace in the way mentioned, brings into being insight into the five aggregates of clinging as impermanent, etc. This is insight. Through the fulfilling of insight, one-pointedness of mind arises, based upon the relinquishing of the *dhammas* arisen in that contemplation. This is peace. So insight is first, afterwards peace. Therefore it is referred to as bringing into being peace preceded by insight. As he is bringing into being peace preceded by insight, the path is born to him. He practises, brings into being and makes much of that path. When he practises, brings into being and makes much of that path, his fetters are abandoned, his latent tendencies are destroyed—in this way he brings into being peace preceded by insight.

But both for one who brings into being insight preceded by peace and for one who brings into being peace preceded by insight, at the moment of the transcendent path peace and insight are yoked as a pair...."

The works of Buddhaghosa

One *sutta* in the Aṅguttara-nikāya (II 155-6) distinguishes the person who reaches the final goal with effort (*sa-saṅkhāraparinibbāyī*) from one who does so with ease (*asaṅkhāra*). Only the latter attains to the four *jhānas*. Buddhaghosa's commentary explains that the first individual is one who develops just insight (*sukkha-vipassaka*).[33] The person who reaches the goal with ease is explained as one whose vehicle is peace (*samatha-yānika*).[34]

The term *yāna*—'vehicle' or 'carriage'—refers in a number of contexts to the eightfold path.[35] This is further developed in the Vibhaṅga Commentary.[36] The vehicle of insight (*vipassanā-yāna*) is equated with knowledge (*vijjā*) and the first two items of the eightfold path. The vehicle of peace is identified with conduct (*caraṇa*) and the remaining six factors of the path. The source must be another *sutta* from the Sīlakkhandha: the Ambaṭṭha-sutta, which gives a description of the path in terms of the well-known phrase 'endowed with knowledge and conduct'. According to Buddhaghosa, the

vehicle of peace overcomes the extreme of practising self-mortification, while the vehicle of insight overcomes the extreme of practising sensual enjoyment. This must be derived from the Nettipakaraṇa.

The precise position of Buddhaghosa is made clear in the Visuddhimagga, when the way to initiate the development of insight is described. One whose vehicle is peace begins by examining the contents of his mind after emerging from *jhāna*, especially the *jhāna* factors themselves. Having established that they are *nāma* (explained as 'that which bends the mind towards an object'), he seeks the underlying support of *nāma*—its 'lair'. He finds it in the heart *rūpa*. This he discovers to be supported by the four elements and the *rūpas* derived from them. He establishes that they are in fact *rūpa* (defined as 'that which is afflicted' i.e. capable of being damaged by contact with other *rūpa*).

Once the precise nature of *nāma* and *rūpa* is established, he is able to establish that there is no entity or person or deity apart from *nāma* and *rūpa*. In other words he understands the no self teaching and thereby becomes established in right view which sees things as they are. He then avoids the two extremes of affirming a soul not subject to destruction and affirming one subject to destruction, so falling either into eternalism or into annihilationism. This point is reached in a different way by one whose vehicle is purely insight (*suddha-vipassanā*). He must commence with *rūpa*. This is also possible as an alternative option for one whose vehicle is peace.[37]

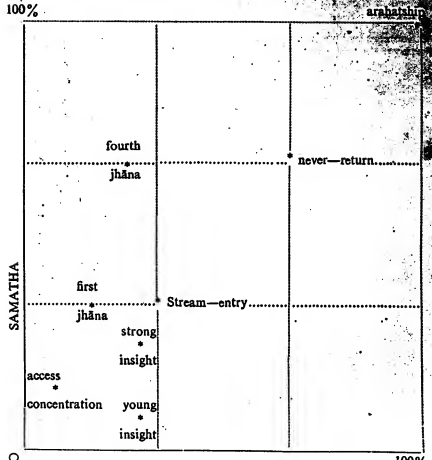
In the Commentary to the Dhammasaṅgaṇī we learn that the first path (*magga*) is of the first *jhāna* in three cases: one who develops just insight (*sukkha-vipassaka*), one who has (*jhāna*) attainments but does not use them as the basis for insight and one who arouses the path using the first *jhāna* as basis.[38] This corresponds almost exactly to the Visuddhimagga account.

Two other passages from Buddhaghosa's commentaries seem worth mentioning. Discussing the situation of someone with the delusion that he has reached some attainment, it is suggested that one who has purely obtained peace or purely obtained insight would believe that he was a stream-enterer, once-returner or never-returner. One who had obtained both peace and insight would believe he was an arahat.[39] Another passage discusses the difference between painful progress and pleasant progress (in suppressing the hindrances) as concerned with the degree of craving and whether the necessary work has been done for *samatha*. The subsequent difference between slow and rapid acquiring of direct knowledge is concerned with the strength of ignorance and whether the necessary work has been done for *vipassanā*.[40]

Conclusion

Returning to the question with which this article began, one thing is clear. Important and continuing traditions in the ancient literature saw the path

as varying significantly in its mode of access. The kind of picture which emerges is best expressed graphically:



Such a graph is, of course, intended only as a visual metaphor. Obviously the ancient Buddhist thinkers did not conceive of the relationships involved in geometric terms. Nevertheless it does clarify some aspects. The goal is seen as a dynamic balance of qualities—in this case peace and insight, but others are also important. The route to that goal may involve the development of some of those qualities before others, but in the longer term none can be neglected. All are essential. Only the order of development is variable. There could be no question of a 'short cut', neglecting some aspects.

To this extent the Thai meditation master who was cited initially in this article is not out of tune with the ancient literature. Of course, the works

which we have examined intend more than this. They also envisage a real difference in approach between the individual who works from the side of *samatha* and one who adopts pure insight as his vehicle. This seems to be partly a matter of what is helpful or natural to an individual of a particular temperament or character type and partly a matter of personal predilection. Each alternative would have advantages and disadvantages. Of course it is to be expected that adherents of a particular approach will tend to stress its advantages and perhaps minimize the disadvantages.

NOTES

1. J. Kornfield *Living Buddhist Masters*, Unity Press, Santa Cruz 1977, pp. 41-2.
2. I am, of course, aware that a number of attempts at such historico-critical analysis have been made, some of them involving impressive and detailed scholorship. I remain, as yet, unconvinced. It seems to me that all these attempts suffer from serious flaws. Firstly and most importantly, they do not take sufficient account of the nature of oral literature. See my article on Pali Oral Literature (in P. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky *Buddhist Studies*, Curzon Press, London 1983). Secondly they seem to me to be guilty of an error in method.

   In order to construct a chronological analysis of the literature, a series of decisions have to be taken on such matters as the likely dating of particular texts or discourses, their analysis into earlier or later components, the probable stage at which particular formulae came into use, the length of time which it would take for miraculous elements to develop, etc. etc. Unfortunately these elements are often dependent upon one another in complex ways. As a result a series of assumptions have to be made. The consequence is that later decisions are made upon the basis of earlier ones, which were themselves based upon even earlier decisions. In the present state of our knowledge conclusions reached in this way can have little probability.

   A mathematical analogy may make my point clear. A series of choices may be made, each having a 70% probability of being correct, but each dependent upon the correctness of previous choices. The likelihood of an accurate end choice is of course not 70%, but far less. Indeed, after only three stages a correct choice is unlikely.

   A third objection is that such analyses tend to depend at important points upon the detection of inconsistencies and contradictions in the literature. It seems to me that too much can be made of this. In spiritual traditions the world over, instructors have frequently employed apparent contradiction as part of their teaching method- perhaps to induce greater awareness in the pupil or to bring about a deeper and wider view of the subject in hand. The Pali Canon contains many explicit examples of such methods. (Indeed much of the Kathāvatthu makes better sense in these terms than as sectarian controversy.) There are, undoubtedly, many cases where a different or apparently contradictory statement is simply a more implicit use of them. Any attempt to analyse all such 'contradictions' as representing different historical or textual strata is puerile. Such features must have been present from the beginning.

   For fear of misunderstanding, let me add that I by no means wish to wholly deny the value of text-critical approaches to the literature. It is rather a question of caution in the application of techniques derived from the study of the development of written manuscript literatures to the somewhat different situation of an oral literature and in the absence of a secure external historical context. Most I also add that I certainly consider the attempts which have been made to be productive of useful insights (especially in the case of the work of Erich Frauwallner).
3. cf PTC sv *adhikaraṇa*; e.g. Vin IV 207, etc.; D III 254; M II 247; A I 99; A IV 144.
4. cf PTC sv *nirodha* (twenty two passages listed as *virāgo -o nibbānaṃ*); Sn 732c; S III 133.
5. D III 54; M I 235.
6. A I 231-5; IV 380 foll.; Pug 37; cf. A II 136.
7. M I 33-6, 213-16; A v 131; It 39; Nd. 1 375, 500; Nd. 2 95.
8. M I 254; A III 21.
9. A IV 360; cf note 14 below.
10. e.g. M III 289, 297; S IV 360, 362; V 52; A I 100; II 247; cf S IV 195; Paṭis I 28.
11. e.g. D III 213, 273; A I 95.
12. e.g. M I 494 foll.; A III 116-18; cf also M I 323.
13. A III 373.
14. e.g. Dhs 10-11, etc.; Vbh 107, etc; 250; Pug 25; Paṭis I 119, 191; Nd. I 45, 77, 334, 365, 456, 501; Nd. 2 190, 268.
15. A II 92-5; IV 360; V 99-104; Pug 7, 8, 61.
16. Paṭis II 92-103.
17. Paṭis A 586; AA III 143.
18. Paṭis A 584.
19. e.g. Paṭis I 28, 64, 70, 94 foll., 97 ff, 168 ff 174,; II 168, 172; Dhs 8; 10, 11, etc., 232; Nd. I 360, 508; cf also Pet 122; Netti 54, 76.
20. Nd. I 207. I take the Niddesa to be definitely later than the earlier Abhidhamma works, since Nd. I 445-7 shows clear acquaintance with the Buddha's visit to the Tāvatiṃsa heaven, intimately bound up with the preaching of the Abhidhamma.
21. Pet 4, 122, 254 foll.; Netti 2-4, 113; 127; cf also Pet 17, 86, 114, 123-4; Netti 42, 48, 110.

jiriki 自力
Jōdo hōmon genryūshō 淨土法門源流章
jū 住
jūjūshin 十住心
Jūjūshinron 十住心論
k'an-hua 看話禪
Kegon 華嚴
kenchūshi 兼中至
kenchūtō 兼中到
kōan 公案
Kūkai 空海
Kyōgyōshinshō 教行信證
li 理
Lin-chi 臨濟
mappō 末法
miao-chüeh 妙覺
mo-fa 末法
myōkaku 妙覺
nangyō 難行
nembutsu 念佛
noh 能
p'an-chiao chih tu 判教制度
P'ang Yün 龐蘊
Pao-t'ang 保唐
pien-chung-cheng 偏中正
三聖圓融觀門
shin 信
Shinran 親鸞
Shōbōgenzō 正法眼藏
shōchūhen 正中偏
shōchūrai 正中來
shushō ittō 修證一等
Sŏn 禪
Sōtō 曹洞
T'ien-t'ai 天台
Ta-hui Tsung-kao 大慧宗杲
Ta-sheng ch'i-hsin lun 大乘起信論
Tannishō 歎異抄
tariki 他力
Tendai 天台
teng-chüeh 等覺
ti 地
tōgaku 等覺
Ts'ao-tung 曹洞
Tsung-mi 宗密
wu-wei 五位
Yoshizu Yoshihide 吉津宜英
Zazenron 坐禪論
Zen 禪

Theravāda Buddhist Soteriology and the Paradox of Desire

Grace G. Burford

Introduction

The path (mārga) to enlightenment has traditionally functioned as the focus of Buddhist practice and theory. As Robert Buswell and Robert Gimello have observed, each of the various Buddhist schools delineates and endorses a specific path, or pattern of religious behavior, that is seen as leading inevitably to a particular religious goal. In many cases we find quite a few points of disagreement among these different versions of Buddhist soteriology and the interpretations of reality they imply. The Buddhist tradition's lack of consistency with regard to the Buddha's most basic claims comes as no great surprise because of its long history and extensive geographical spread. Such inconsistency, although of some interest to the historian of religions, has little significance for the Buddhist believer-practitioners who are aligned with one of the many specific types of Buddhism. Inconsistencies between the doctrines and practices of any one school of Buddhism and those of another have little impact on the followers of either one. These inconsistencies are not used to challenge the basic truth-claim of the religion because no one takes the entire corpus of teachings attributed to the Buddha over the past twenty-five centuries—from the early Pali scriptures to the later Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan texts—as a reliable record of the truth that the Buddha saw and taught.[1]

In contrast, the presence of inconsistencies within a particular Buddhist tradition raises serious questions. In this case inconsistencies are problematic both for the believer-practitioner in that tradition who attempts to implement the advice of the Buddha in daily practice and for the philosopher who seeks to evaluate this version of the Buddha's teachings as a description of a path to the highest human good. Every version of the buddhadhamma (truth, teachings of the Buddha) includes components we might distinguish as epistemology, metaphysics,

cosmology, soteriology, and ethics. Some inconsistencies within this complex of teachings may actually pose no problem whatsoever. After all, a specific bit of practical advice is not generally expected to be universally applicable. For example, it does not seem unreasonable for the Buddha to have told one person to work hard and give alms and another to take up the life of a wandering mendicant and gather alms. This inconsistency does not pose a serious challenge to the validity of the Buddha's teachings because both pieces of advice reflect a consistent, underlying, normative value theory. The purpose of both giving and gathering alms is assumed to be the cultivation of selflessness, and the two practices can be seen as different stages of the path to eventual elimination of selfish attachment.

Indeed, even more theoretical points of doctrine may safely conflict as long as they are explained in terms of a common evaluation of what is fundamentally true and good. Insofar as the various teachings attributed to the Buddha concerning the path to the highest ideal reflect a consistent assessment of what is ultimately valuable, no particular inconsistencies among them seriously challenge either the believer-practitioner's ability to put them into practice or the philosopher's acceptance of the fundamental Buddhist claim that the Buddha discovered and taught the truth.

If the scriptures of any particular branch or school of Buddhism are truthful records of the Buddha's efforts to teach his followers how to reach, as he had done, the highest religious goal, they must contain answers to two crucial questions: (1) what is the highest religious goal? and (2) how does one attain it? Here I will consider what happens within one particular Buddhist tradition, the Theravāda, when one of its most ancient normative texts implies conflicting answers to these fundamental questions—when it presents two different explicit patterns of religious behavior that reflect contradictory concepts of the highest religious goal.

The Theravāda is the oldest known school of Buddhism, describing itself as not only the earliest but also the most conservative of the schools, the one that preserves unchanged the words *(vāda)* of the Buddha as remembered and codified shortly after his death in the sixth century B.C.E. by his immediate disciples, the elders *(theras)*. For the strictly orthodox Theravāda believer, there is no such thing as doctrinal development within the Theravāda canonical texts. In this view, the Pali scriptures record the very words of the Buddha *(buddhavacana)*, the fully enlightened one, whose teachings required no improvement or alteration.

The Theravāda did develop a long tradition of commentarial literature in which many skilled interpreters explained the teachings of the Buddha, as recorded in the Pali canon, in greater and greater detail.

Their aim is not to alter the Buddha's teachings, however, but to dispel any appearance of inconsistency or confusion within the recorded buddhadhamma. From this traditional Theravāda perspective, the Buddha's specific advice may have varied from time to time or follower to follower, but it all reflects a consistent and coherent worldview that an able commentator can elucidate. This commentarial tradition began even before the closing of the canon (ca. second century B.C.E.) and reached its peak during the fifth century C.E. in the literary activity of Buddhaghosa, whose work is considered normative in the traditional Theravāda interpretation of buddhadhamma.

The canonical Theravāda text I will examine here, the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, is one of the few Pali texts for which there is substantial evidence of its historical place within the early Buddhist literature. It appears in the Chinese *Āgamas* with contents almost identical to the Pali version.[2] In addition, the Bhabru edict of Aśoka refers to several suttas that appear to belong to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*.[3] Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese texts refer often to the *Aṭṭhakavagga* by name.[4] The most convincing indication of its relative antiquity within Buddhist literature is the fact that a commentary on it (the *Mahāniddesa*) forms the major portion of the only commentary accepted as canonical by the Theravāda tradition. Thus the *Aṭṭhakavagga* seems to have been a popular text that has been preserved, referred to, and interpreted within the Buddhist tradition since its early history. By Buddhaghosa's time, it had long been treated as the fourth *vagga* of the *Sutta-nipāta*, and Buddhaghosa comments on it as such in his commentary on the *Sutta-nipāta* (the *Paramatthajotikā II*). By focusing on the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, we can consider not only a very interesting and relatively early Buddhist text, but also the Theravāda interpretations of that text dating from two significant periods in the history of this Buddhist tradition, namely, the late-canonical period and the time of Buddhaghosa.

The *Aṭṭhakavagga*

The Ideal and the Path

No one term emerges in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as a label for the ultimate goal of the path therein prescribed. For example, one cannot examine all instances of the word "nibbāna" in this text and hope to understand the ideal goal according to the teaching it presents. Neither is it possible to understand this goal by examining all the other terms used in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* to designate the ideal goal, because that goal is for the most part discussed indirectly—through depictions of what exemplary persons do and avoid doing, and through contrasts drawn between such persons and others who represent less-than-ideal attitudes and behavior.

This linguistic feature of the text reflects a significant aspect of the religious worldview preserved in the *Aṭṭhakavagga:* the definition of the highest ideal is inseparable from the delineation of how persons can live life fully and well. That is, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* focuses primarily on the path, which it defines in terms of the person who cultivates it. Further, through its almost exclusive focus on explicit patterns of behavior and characteristics or qualities of persons (both ideal and less than ideal), it implies that the goal is equivalent to the path perfected (i.e., properly followed). If one does what ideal persons do, one has followed the path and attained the goal.[3] The summum bonum is neither transcendent nor categorically distinct from what is good to do and what is bad to do, for all people, in everyday life.

The terms the *Aṭṭhakavagga* uses most frequently to refer to the goal are *suddhi* (purity) and *santi* (calmness). According to the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* when one has achieved the ideal, one has achieved purity and calmness. Yet neither of these terms represents an abstract notion of a goal apart from the ideal person's qualities. In this text purity and calmness have no significance apart from pure or calm people.

Further, as characteristics of ideal persons, purity and calmness tend to reveal more about the less-than-ideal condition than about the ideal condition. Purity, as an ideal, points to the fact that nonideal persons are subject to certain specific impurities. Although the text discusses the impurities considered characteristic of less-than-ideal persons, the exact meaning of purity remains unspecified. Purity does not involve doing certain things or being a certain way, but rather consists of not behaving in specific ways. The same observation holds generally for calmness, which amounts to an absence of anxieties. Such anxieties can be pinpointed in the text, but calmness is just calmness (i.e., not being agitated, not being excitable, not being quick to anger, feel grief, etc.).

Several other terms that occur in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* could represent the goal that ideal persons have reached. *Viveka* (seclusion or separation) is used to refer to seclusion or separation of the individual person, rather than expressing a characteristic of the goal itself. It is not that the goal is isolated from the less-than-ideal world in any way; rather, the ideal person strives for seclusion (v. 822) and sees seclusion (v. 851). Likewise, *khema* (security) is used to refer directly to a condition of the ideal person. With both these terms, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* continues to elucidate the goal by contrasting it with qualities of less-than-ideal life.

The Theravāda tradition's primary label for the goal, nibbāna, occurs in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* three times. Verse 940 advises the person striving for the ideal to "train for his/her nibbāna";[4] v. 822 describes the one striving for *viveka* as "near nibbāna"; and v. 942 describes a trainee on the path to the ideal as one "having [his/her] mind [set] on nibbāna." These three instances of the term "nibbāna" are the only times the *Aṭṭhakavagga* uses labels for the ideal goal that do not refer to a particular attribute or quality of the person who has reached it. Since there is no definition of "nibbāna" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* we should not rule out the possibility that in this text the word does signify something specific about the ideal person that has been obscured by the later development of this word. The one occurrence in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* of its verb-form counterpart, *nibbāti,* indicates that even this goal-referent was understood in terms of the actions or achievements of an ideal person:

> Having seen what does a bhikkhu *nibbāti* [become cool?], not grasping anything in the world?[7]

All four of these examples are consistent with the *Aṭṭhakavagga's* overall treatment of terms that refer to the goal, in that they focus on how the ideal person strives for the goal, rather than substantively describing the ideal condition itself.

In light of the *Aṭṭhakavagga's* anthropocentric treatment of the goal itself, it comes as no surprise that almost every line of every verse in this text says something about the persons who have achieved this ideal or are striving for it. This information falls into two broad categories: positive terminology concerning what the ideal person has accomplished, and—by far the greater number of instances—negative vocabulary relating what such a person has eliminated or overcome.

We find a limited set of words in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* for ideal persons and—in verses in which the training that leads to the goal is recommended—for potential ideal persons. The terms that function in this way most often are *muni* (silent one), bhikkhu, and brāhmaṇa. *Dhīra* (wise one), *dhona, santa* (calm one), *vedagū* (knowledgeable one), *vidvā* (knowing one), *vimutta* (released one), *nāga, pāragū* and *pāraṃgata* (one gone beyond), *paṇḍita* (wise one), and *samaṇa* also occur.[8]

Most of these labels communicate something about the qualities and characteristics of the persons they designate, indicating that silence, wisdom, calmness, knowledge, and the like are exemplary features of ideal persons; indeed, these characteristics have been adopted to epitomize such persons. The remainder of the positive terminology relating to these persons emerges in the *Aṭṭhakavagga's* descriptions of ideal persons' positive characteristics and in specific recommendations to persons who would strive to attain this ideal.

According to the *Aṭṭhakavagga,* ideal persons are mindful *(sata, satimā).* Their primary positive characteristics have to do with seeing and knowing. As we have seen, an ideal person sees *viveka* (seclusion, v. 851) and *khema* (security, v. 809); such a person has open eyes (v. 921), yet is not visually greedy (v. 922) and has downcast eyes (v. 972). Thus such a one controls vision and minimizes distraction. Observation of the unhappy consequences of less-than-ideal behavior provides a strong

motivation to strive for the ideal (e.g., vv. 777, 817). Seeing is both the final prerequisite for attaining the goal (v. 915) and the ideal condition itself (v. 795).

The importance of knowing is clear in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, both as a means to the goal and as an attribute of the ideal person. Several terms in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* signify knowing and knowledge or wisdom, such as *paññā* (wisdom), *ñatvā* (having known), many other forms of *jānāti* (to know), *veda* (knowledge), and *vidvā* (knowing—an old perfect active participle in *-vas*). Wisdom frees one from illusions (v. 847), and reverence for it leads one to strive for the ideal (v. 969). The ideal person knows dhamma as well as the dangers of less-than-ideal living (e.g., vv. 775, 792, 933, 943, 947). In v. 971 the trainee for the goal is encouraged to "know moderation for the sake of satisfaction here."[9] To know is both the chief means to the goal and the primary characteristic activity of one who has achieved it. To be wise is the highest good. Accordingly, in the one instance of the term "buddha" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, it functions as an adjective ("awakened"), applied to Gotama. Likewise, *sambodhi* (awakening or enlightenment) refers once in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* to the ideal goal itself, since the trainee for the goal is called "one desirous of awakening" (*sambodhikāma*, v. 963).

In addition to being alert and knowledgeable, the ideal person is unmoved by this seeing and knowing. This notion of equanimity is expressed with forms of *upekkha* and *sama*. Here equanimity is equivalent to mental composure (v. 972) and incompatible with selfish grasping (vv. 855, 911–912). Someone with equanimity is not affected by praise or blame (vv. 895–896). The ideal person is "the same in all circumstances" (v. 952).

Finally, the ideal person is released, liberated. We have seen that the ideal person is freed by wisdom (v. 847) and that such a person is sometimes designated as a *vimutta* (released one). In v. 877 release is said to come after knowledge and is described as concomitant to refraining from arguments. According to v. 975, the mindful person's *citta* (mind) is released. All in all, in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* release is associated with a mental state that is knowledgeable, yet free and not defensive.

Release or freedom, not unlike purity and calmness, defines the ideal person at least partly in negative terms, which leads us to inquire: from what exactly are these persons free? Although goal-referents are scarce and positive terminology rather vague in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, it is full of negative vocabulary, which occurs in both specific ethical injunctions and in a complex, broader teaching against desire and grasping. Almost every sutta of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* includes a number of formulaically reiterated injunctions against particular types of behavior, including indulging in grief, lamentation, envy, greed, anger, false-speaking, doubt, pride, conceit, backbiting, and selfishness.[10]

Desire stands out as the primary problem, according to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. A strong condemnation of desire—desire in and of itself, desire for particular persons and objects and ideas, all action that naturally follows upon desire (namely, grasping or acquiring), and any dependence that results from action motivated by desire—emerges from the rich and varied vocabulary relating to desire. The *Aṭṭhakavagga* describes a vicious circle of wrong behavior, a self-perpetuating series of events based on indulgence in desire. Once one desires and thereby binds oneself through grasping or attachment, that very bondage increases the likelihood of becoming involved in further attachment and desire. The ideal person desists from all such activity (grasping, attachment); having undermined its cause (desire), such a one eliminates its ill effect (dependence on or bondage to particular persons, objects, and ideas).

In the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, two types of persons are described: ideal and less than ideal. The two modes of living that they represent are contrasted for the benefit of those who would make the transition to the ideal by abandoning the ways of less-than-ideal persons and emulating the ways of ideal persons, thereby attaining the goal themselves. The less-than-ideal sort of life, led by selfish, deluded persons, is marked by desire, personal and interpersonal strife, grief, anxiety, attachment, and dependence. The ideal life, led by knowledgeable persons who clearly see life and the world as it unfolds and who live in accordance with wisdom, is characterized by harmony and calmness, purified of the negative qualities of ordinary life.

The goal described here is anthropocentric and individually oriented, in every way; whether one lives in the ideal or less-than-ideal manner is entirely one's own responsibility and affects only oneself. Although we might assume that social harmony naturally would result from everyone following the teachings this text prescribes, this is never cited as a motivation for doing so.[11] Even more significantly, the goal itself consists of living in the ideal way. The means recommended for achieving the ideal—being alert, watchful, and equable; seeing and knowing; avoiding conceit, greed, and slander; rejecting desire; not grasping; being free of dependence on any particular persons and things—are often utilized in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as descriptions of the defining characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of persons who have achieved the ideal goal. Indeed, the text never describes ideal persons or the condition they have achieved in terms other than these. On the basis of the evidence of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself, there is no way to distinguish between ideal and less-than-ideal persons except by the perfect consistency with which ideal persons behave in the ideal ways.

This continuity of path and goal reflects and expresses the continuity of values operative in this account of the ideal goal and how one achieves it. The values remain constant throughout; none is added at

the point of reaching the ideal condition. The same attitudes and actions that are valued as good along the way to the goal, when they are but inconsistently maintained by the aspirant, prove to be valued as good ultimately, when they are maintained consistently by the ideal person.

Two Approaches to the Goal

The *Aṭṭhakavagga* emphasizes the problematic nature of desire and attachment. One object of desire that it singles out for special attention is view *(diṭṭhi)*. In the first instance of the term, v. 781 says:

> How could one who is led by desire, intent on what s/he prefers,
> fulfilling his/her own [expectations],
> overcome his/her very own view?
> Just as that one would know, so would s/he preach.[12]

Here the *Aṭṭhakavagga* treats a less-than-ideal person's espousal of a particular view as a manifestation of desire. Due to desire, one prefers one view over all others and thus prevents oneself from seeing the truth and becoming truly knowledgeable. There is no worse barrier to mindful seeing than the belief that one has already seen and known fully.

Further, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* indicates that such a person prefers a view that legitimates and reinforces his or her desires. The less-than-ideal person substitutes a particular view for a direct apprehension of reality. If one does not refer to reality directly as its own truth, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* implies, one's only criterion for choosing among the competing formulations of truth is selfish desire: which view best states what one wishes were true? When one has found such a view, one will defend it with conviction born not of personal and direct apprehension of the truth, but rather of the fact that it meets that primary selfish criterion. Hence attachment to views epitomizes the viciously circular, self-perpetuating nature of desire, attachment, and dependence in general. A good number of verses in the text dwell on this topic, elucidating the dangerous consequences of attachment to views, such as being drawn constantly into quarrels and disputes, losing one's composure, and selfishly denigrating those whose views differ from one's own.

Several verses condemn all relative ranking of and preference *(purakkhata)* for things and people. This follows logically from the notion that desire and attachment are major obstacles to achieving the ideal goal. To evaluate any one thing or person as superior to another, this reasoning implies, is to indulge in desire and exclusive attachment. The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s strong condemnation of attachment to *diṭṭhi* represents an application of this principle to preference for particular ideas and theories, as is evident in v. 796:

> In contrast to what a person stuck in views calls "highest,"
> and considers to be supreme in the world,
> all else is "inferior,"
> therefore s/he has not gone past disputes.[13]

Despite the anti-*diṭṭhi* condemnation of all preference and relative ranking, v. 969 presents preference in a positive light:

> Having preferred wisdom, having joy in [what is] lovely,
> one should destroy those dangers.[14]

In addition, the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s disapproval (e.g., vv. 796–798) of holding one thing as supreme *(parama, uttari)* and of considering some persons superior to others clashes with its recommendation in v. 822 that one train in *viveka* (seclusion), since that is the highest *(uttama)* practice for noble ones *(ariyas)*.

There is a certain ranking in the very identification of particular persons as ideal and others as less than ideal. Thus it is not surprising that the text's anti-*diṭṭhi* position introduces some inconsistencies into its treatment of exemplary persons. Some verses cite experts or skilled ones *(kusalas)* as authorities, indicating that their words are truthful and should evoke respect (e.g., vv. 782, 783, 798, 830). Yet other verses, concerned with the *diṭṭhi* issue, refer to *kusalas* as argumentative fools (vv. 878, 879, 885). In addition, vv. 866 and 868 refer respectfully to the *samaṇa* as the teacher of dhammas (truths), and numerous verses portray brāhmaṇas as exemplary ideal persons (e.g., vv. 790, 802, 843, 911). But *samaṇas* are also portrayed as argumentative and closed-minded preachers (vv. 828, 883), while v. 859 groups *samaṇas* and brāhmaṇas with common persons and depicts their teaching activities as less than ideal.

In terms of specific actions, we have seen that v. 822 recommends training in seclusion as the highest practice for noble ones. We have also noted that the *Aṭṭhakavagga* frequently emphasizes seeing and knowing as the key attributes of an ideal person. Considering the text's numerous positive references to seeing, one might be surprised at its vehemently negative treatment of *diṭṭhi*, since the notion of a view is at least related to the process of seeing. Yet it is easy enough to infer the rationale underlying this argument. Although seeing is a good thing—leading to the goal, even constituting the goal, if it is done well—formulation of that vision into a view somehow betrays the value of it. However, in presenting the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* occasionally takes the condemnation of views even further, to include seeing itself; it also contains several verses that condemn knowing and knowledge. Verses 788–789 reject knowing as a means to attaining the ideal condition,

while v. 800 relates knowing to forming a view and advises the aspirant against attachment and dependence:

> Having abandoned assumption, not clinging,
> [an ideal person] does not depend even on knowledge.[15]

Verse 909 is the epitome of these verses that deny the efficacy of seeing and knowing as means to the goal:

> A person who sees, sees name and form,
> and having seen, will know them as such.
> Let him/her see as much or as little as s/he likes;
> the experts do not say that [one attains] purity by means of that.[16]

If one ought not to prefer any one teacher, exemplary person, or method for reaching the ideal goal, is there a particular teaching that conveys the ideal? The *Aṭṭhakavagga* wavers on this point, too, as its uses of "dhamma" illustrate. Verse 792 exalts knowing and wisdom and regards "dhamma" as the true teaching. In a number of other verses this term is also used to signify the correct teaching which, when known, frees one from dependence (e.g., vv. 856, 921, 947). Yet in v. 785 "dhamma" signifies a limited view that functions as an object of attachment, and v. 824 indicates that dhammas can be problematic as exclusive, limited teachings:

> They argue "just this is purity,"
> they deny that purity is in other dhammas.[17]

Teachings inherently exclude other teachings. Verse 886 states this directly by noting that if one follows a particular teaching, one inevitably depicts one's own view as true *(sacca)* and all others as false *(musa)*. To follow a particular teaching is to prefer or rank ideas and things in the world—which activity ultimately derives, this argument implies, from desire.

The most striking inconsistency that results from the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument concerns the ideal goal itself. We have just seen that v. 824 depicts less-than-ideal persons as defending their own dhamma in terms of its exclusive claim to purity *(suddhi)*. Similarly, vv. 898 and 906 argue that those who present their teachings or paths as true render purity exclusive and so, the text implies, invalid. If the ideal person is beyond all preferences and holds nothing as beyond or further (v. 795), it follows that s/he does not even prefer purity over impurity, or grasp calmness in preference to anxiety (v. 900). Yet the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself—attributed to the most exemplary of all ideal persons, the Buddha—draws clear distinctions between ideal and less-than-ideal persons, practices, and teachings, and definitely teaches that the ideal is ultimately preferable to the less-than-ideal condition.

The specific inconsistencies concerning ideal persons and practices that occur within the teaching recorded in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* verses point to the presence in this text of two different approaches to the ideal. On the one hand, persons strive for an ideal condition that both consists of and is reached through (1) cultivating seeing and knowing, and (2) avoiding attachment and desire. Once they have attained this goal, such ideal persons teach others how to follow a similar path. On the other hand, to prefer certain persons, actions, or views over any others is itself to desire and to be attached. The ideal of desirelessness consists of defending no particular view or path, avoiding argumentation, and living entirely without preference—even for a revered teacher, respected teaching, or ideal condition.

The specific condemnation of attachment to *diṭṭhis* (views) follows logically from the general condemnation of desire. The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s argument against *diṭṭhis* focuses on this type of attachment as particularly pervasive and dangerous. The issue is not whether one's particular view is true or false, but whether one is attached to any particular view.[18] Presumably, even if one were to discover a true *diṭṭhi*—and this possibility is never explicitly ruled out—aligning oneself with it, to the exclusion of conflicting views, would prevent one from attaining the ideal. In other words, despite all the talk about *diṭṭhis* recorded in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, the discussion is not really about views and opinions, but rather about the formulation and defense of them. As Luis Gómez has observed, the *Aṭṭhakavagga* neither proposes a new view nor systematically rejects all views.[19] What is soundly rejected is attachment to views.

The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s recommendations of certain means to a goal, exaltation of certain persons as exemplary of the ideal, and descriptions of certain conditions or qualities as of ultimate value raise two types of questions about the viability of the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching. The first concerns the contradictions between the general anti-desire teaching and the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching about the nature of the ideal and the path to it. The second concerns the status of the teaching of no-views as a view itself. Doesn't the no-views teaching unavoidably perpetuate the discrimination of "true" and "false" by its own contradiction of the claims —found in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself—that certain means lead to a particular ideal and that certain persons are exemplary of that ideal? Can a dhamma that consists of the rejection of all attachment, even to dhammas themselves, be presented coherently in oral or written form? Can the truth, so conceived, ever be expressed in words, as a specific teaching?

Although the latter type of question is a theoretical, intellectual prob-

lem, the former illustrates why it is a serious one, even in a fully practical setting. If one were to endeavor to achieve the ideal by means of the methods set out in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, it would be crucial to be able to discern which means (if any) that text is actually recommending, which persons (if any) are to be regarded as exemplary role models, and which conditions or qualities (if any) one should aim to attain. It is difficult to see how such information could be derived from this teaching without transgressing the general principle, espoused in the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument, that no view, way, teaching, or teacher should be preferred over any other. If "choicelessness" is ideal, then how does one choose what to do?[20]

The danger of attachment to particular views concerning means to the goal, ideal persons, and the nature of the goal itself is the central concern of the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching. The anti-views argument is not presented in order to replace all previous, untrue teachings with a new, improved teaching.[21] Consequently there is, at least in theory, no place within this teaching for particular advice to the aspirant for the goal. As long as the ideal is held to be complete detachment from preference for particular, exclusive teachings, no authority can be found for recommending that the aspirant follow particular means to particular ends. The view of no-views is a teaching of nonduality. As such, it cannot explicitly deny the validity of views that deny the validity of other views without undermining its own authority.

This paradox brings to mind another that is raised by the Buddhist teachings: the paradox of desire. The parallel amounts to more than mere coincidence of form. Briefly stated, the Buddhist paradox of desire is that desirelessness is ideal, yet one must cultivate one's desire to attain the ideal in order to be motivated to continue to strive for that goal. Every action one performs on the path to the goal is a manifestation of desire. If one is ever to attain desirelessness, it will be by means of desire-driven actions. Although ultimately one strives to be free of all desires, the only way to accomplish this is by means of desire.[22]

The focus of the anti-*diṭṭhi* teaching is, as we have seen, the less-than-ideal nature of attachment to particular views. As a philosophical stance, this teaching leads to self-contradiction in terms of the values it upholds. On the one hand, nonduality is ideal, and any preference for one teaching over another belies true understanding. On the other hand, the duality of desire versus nondesire, or of duality versus nonduality, reflects something real, and the preference for one (nondesire, nonduality) over the other (desire, duality) is ideal. This is simply a radical, extended form of the paradox of desire, in which both desire and the absence of desire are valued. It results from adding a very important component to the teaching that desire is characteristic of the less-than-ideal and must be eradicated in order to attain the goal. That component is views. By extending the objects of desire to include views, this teaching eventually forces the issue of the paradox of desire. By shifting the focus away from desire for things and people and existence—and toward attachment to views—it brings out the less obvious (and therefore even more troublesome) inconsistency of the teaching that identifies desire as the problem and then fails to show how the desire to end desire is different from any other sort of desire.[23] One cannot ignore the ease with which the anti-views argument is developed here: from the premise that desire is the root of all evil comes the argument that preference for any particular view, path, and even goal is counterproductive on the path to the ideal.

The Commentaries

The Ideal and the Path

In the course of defining and commenting on the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s soteriological vocabulary, the *Mahāniddesa* commentator and Buddhaghosa present a highly developed understanding of the ideal goal and the path to it. They maintain a certain continuity with the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s outlook, both in their emphasis on desire as the root cause of the problems of the less-than-ideal condition and in their descriptions of the path to the ideal in terms of specific negative actions and attitudes to be overcome by one aspiring to the summum bonum.

These commentators on the *Aṭṭhakavagga* interpret its contrasting depictions of less-than-ideal and ideal persons in terms of a complex path theory. The number of categories of persons goes from two (less than ideal and ideal) to at least three: ordinary persons, persons striving for the ideal, and ideal persons. Frequently these categories are even more numerous, as the commentators distinguish laypeople from monastics; those who might still backslide in their progress toward the ideal from those who have "entered the stream" and are assured of eventually attaining their goal; and those who have entered the stream from those who are "once-returners," "never-returners," and arahants (who have reached the highest goal). The path itself is marked by organized gradations of negative factors eliminated, is called "noble," and is described as eightfold. Here truth is encapsulated in another eightfold formula, that of the four noble truths concerning *dukkha* (discomfort, ill) plus the same four, but substituting *āsavas* (influxes, toxins) for *dukkha*. This constitutes a highly refined, complex soteriology that contrasts sharply with the simple notions of path and goal reflected in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*.[24]

Diṭṭhi *and the Paradox of Desire*

The *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* position takes to a logical extreme the notion that desire is the root cause of all that is wrong with the less-than-

ideal condition, and concludes that all preferential ranking—even that of spiritual teachers, paths, and ideal goals—is ultimately a form of desire and therefore itself less than ideal. Although it is possible to see how the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument might have arisen from the general anti-desire view, which teaches a particular ideal, the presence of both in one text proves somewhat problematic. The two commentaries we are considering here are almost identical in their treatment of the specific inconsistencies raised by the juxtaposition of these two teachings in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, and of the more theoretical paradox raised by the anti-*diṭṭhi* position itself.

The main difference between the two is that Buddhaghosa writes in a somewhat freer form. Not being limited, like the *Mahāniddesa*, to the task of explaining each term in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* with a separate gloss *(niddesa)*, he can introduce new terms and draw connections among different words, lines, and verses. The *Paramatthajotikā II* often records noticeably smoother interpretations of particular verses than does the *Mahāniddesa*, but in most cases it provides a concisely reworded summary of the *Mahāniddesa*'s analysis.

The most problematic claim in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* argument is that preference or ranking is always a form of desire and therefore bad. This is problematic because the text itself clearly prefers some people, activities, and teachings over others. The commentaries encounter this problem even more obviously, since they are filled with complex rankings of types of behavior, persons, and even realms of existence.

The *Mahāniddesa* frequently offers a dual *(taṇhā-diṭṭhi)* definition of terms signifying desire, attachment, and dependence as both thirst *(taṇhā)* for a wide variety of objects and desire for (attachment to) a view *(diṭṭhi)*. If this commentary were to follow the example of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, we would expect it to explain the latter form of desire as the selfish attachment to any particular view. The *Mahāniddesa*, however, is very consistent in its interpretation of this form of desire as desire for specific wrong views, as opposed to allegiance to the one correct teaching (i.e., that of the Buddha).

Verse 781 of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* has already been quoted when examining the questions raised by the anti-*diṭṭhi* position:

> How could one who is led by desire, intent on what s/he prefers,
> fulfilling his/her own [expectations],
> overcome his/her very own view?
> Just as that one would know, so would s/he preach.[25]

The *niddesa* on v. 781 is equally useful for illustrating how the commentaries deal with this issue. It describes attachment to view in two ways. First, it refers to, but does not fully recount, a story in which some

adherents of other sects try to lay the blame for a murder on the Buddha and his followers in order to regain their own lost possessions, fame, respect, and honor. Depicting these people as "having this view, indulgence, will, theory," as "intent on that and desiring that," the gloss says that they are "unable to overcome their own view, indulgence, will, theory, and intention," so their ill-repute returns. Therefore how could they overcome their own view?

Second, the *niddesa* lists ten views that such persons "hold as dogma, have grasped as complete, and so cannot relinquish." These ten views occur often elsewhere in the *Mahāniddesa*, in the following formulaic passage:

> The world is eternal, just this [is] truth, [all] else [is] delusion; the world is ephemeral; the world is finite; the world is infinite; the soul/life-principle [is] the body; the soul/life-principle [is] other than the body; the tathāgata is after death; the tathāgata is not after death; the tathāgata both is and is not after death; the tathāgata neither is nor is not after death—just this [is] truth, [all] else [is] delusion.[26]

Buddhaghosa also refers frequently to this list in the *Paramatthajotikā II*. According to the *Mahāniddesa*, these are the views the persons referred to in v. 781 "hold as dogma," and so forth. It cites these views again in its explanation of the last line of this verse. With reference to the idea that such persons fulfill their own expectations, the *Mahāniddesa* says they "render their views highest, best" and each claims

> This [i.e., my] teacher is omniscient; this teaching is well-taught; this group is well-practiced; this view is good; this way is well-attained; this path leads [one] out [of saṃsāra].[27]

But the problem here, judging from the commentaries' further explanations, is not the same problem the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* argument raised. Here the problem lies in the fact that these particular persons have no right to make these claims precisely because their teacher is not omniscient, their teaching not well taught, and so on, so that their path is not one that leads them out of saṃsāra. Thus the *Mahāniddesa* (re: v. 790) explains that

> The brāhmaṇa does not say [etc.][28] that purity [etc.] is [accomplished] by means of an impure path, a wrong path, a path that does not lead [one] out [of saṃsāra], a path other than the foundations of mindfulness, other than the right exertions, other than the bases of psychic power, other than the faculties, other than the powers, other than the constituents of wisdom, other than the noble eightfold path.[29]

In numerous instances, when the *Aṭṭhakavagga* suttas devoted to explaining the *diṭṭhi* position condemn holding any one thing as highest, the *Mahāniddesa* explains that this means regarding any particular

teacher, teaching, group, view, way, or path as right, and then goes on to attribute such reprehensible activity to persons who follow the wrong teachers, teachings, and so forth! This exemplifies the commentaries' treatment of this issue: when they try to preserve the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s *diṭṭhi* argument, they produce extreme internal inconsistencies, precisely because they have so thoroughly opted for the other version of the teaching in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*—namely, the one that regards certain persons as exemplary and certain teachers as teaching the truth about the valid way to the true highest goal.

The commentaries ignore the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s blanket condemnation of exclusive teachings and focus instead on determining which specific teachings are true and which are false. Thus at six negative instances of the term "dhamma" in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, the *Mahāniddesa* identifies the term with the sixty-two theories *(diṭṭhigatas)*.[30] Although the *Mahāniddesa* never lists the sixty-two theories, it refers to them often and frequently treats them as synonymous with the ten wrong views of the "This world is eternal" passage. In other negative instances the commentary defines "dhamma" as "teacher, teaching, group, view, way, or path," explicitly indicating that it is referring to teachers, teachings, followers, and paths other than the Buddha, dhamma, saṅgha, and noble eightfold path. Where the *Aṭṭhakavagga* uses "dhamma" positively, the commentary delineates the specific contents of this one true teaching, namely

> All *saṃkhāras* [(tendencies, compositions) are] impermanent; all *saṃkhāras* [are] *dukkha;* all dhammas [are] without self; *saṃkhāras* [are] dependent on ignorance; consciousness [is] dependent on *saṃkhāras;* name-form [is] dependent on consciousness; the six organs and objects of sense . . . ; touch . . . ; feelings . . . ; thirst . . . ; grasping . . . ; existence . . . ; birth . . . ; old age [and] death . . . ; cessation of *saṃkhāras* [is] due to cessation of ignorance; cessation of consciousness [is] due to cessation of *saṃkhāras;* [etc.] . . . cessation of old age [and] death [is] due to cessation of birth; this is *dukkha;* this is arising of *dukkha;* this is cessation of *dukkha;* this is the way leading to cessation of *dukkha;* these are *āsavas;* [etc.] . . . this is the way leading to the cessation of *āsavas;* these dhammas should be known; these dhammas should be understood; these dhammas should be abandoned; these dhammas should be cultivated; these dhammas should be realized; [there is] arising and disappearance, enjoyment, danger, and going out of the five contact spheres; [there is] arising and disappearance, enjoyment, danger, and going out of the five grasping [sensory] substrata; there is arising and disappearance, enjoyment, danger, and going out of the four great elements; whatever is capable of arising, all that is destructible.[31]

As for the particular means to the goal, the commentaries elaborate easily on the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s positive uses of terms related to seeing and knowing. For example, the *niddesa* on v. 837 explains that the person who sees does not grasp views. The reason for this is not that the very act of grasping any view is itself less than ideal, but rather that this ideal person sees the dangerous consequences of grasping the views described in the "This world is eternal" passage, since they are characterized by *dukkha,* are not conducive to nibbāna, are conducive to continued becoming and rebirth in the unhappy realms, and are impermanent, interdependently arisen, and subject to cessation.

The commentaries' methods of avoiding concurrence with the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s strongest condemnation of seeing and knowing are evident in their comments on v. 909:

> A person who sees, sees name and form,
> and having seen, will know them as such.
> Let her/him see as much or as little as s/he likes;
> the experts do not say that [one attains] purity by means of that.[32]

The *Mahāniddesa* simply defines this seeing and knowing as imperfect and inaccurate, thus leaving open the possibility of an accurate vision and knowledge that could see and know name-form *(nāma-rūpa)* as it really is and thus could lead to purity *(suddhi)*.

Like the *Mahāniddesa,* the *Paramatthajotikā II* redefines old terms and—adding to the *Mahāniddesa*'s argument—introduces new ones to render v. 909 compatible with the ongoing commentarial interpretation:

> Who saw by means of knowledge of others' minds [etc.], that person who sees, sees name and form, and having seen other than that [i.e., other than (the true nature of) name and form], will know those names and forms as permanent and happy and not otherwise; thus seeing, let her/him see as much or as little name and form as permanent and happy as s/he likes; the experts do not say [one attains] purity by means of such a seeing *(dassana)* as hers/his.[33]

Thus the commentaries interpret the lines, "A person who sees, sees name and form,/and having seen, will know them as such" as saying, "[That person] does not see name and form, and knows them as they are not"—which is no mean accomplishment.

Certain verses of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* illustrate the logical conclusion of the anti-*diṭṭhi* theory in their negative assessments of the very attributes and accomplishments which the remainder of that text uses to define the ideal. Thus v. 794 says that ideal persons do not preach eternal purity. The *Mahāniddesa* handles this particular conflicting verse in a radical way, explaining that " 'eternal purity' means not-eternal purity, saṃsāra purity, ineffective purity, eternalism."[34] This presents a coherent argument—namely, that when less-than-ideal persons preach about eternal purity they are mistaken and are really talking about eternalism,

not purity in the highest sense. Truly ideal persons, it implies, really do preach true, eternal purity. Yet this interpretation radically alters the *Aṭṭhakavagga* by stating that *accanta* (eternal) means *anaccanta* (not eternal), and in the process contradicts the point of the orginal verse, which is that exemplary persons do not preach or issue claims about the highest goal at all.

The *Paramaṭṭhajotikā II*, too, contradicts the *Aṭṭhakavagga* at v. 794, but in a slightly more subtle manner. Instead of simply substituting "not-eternal" for "eternal" in the line, "They do not preach 'eternal purity,' " Buddhaghosa remarks, "They do not preach supreme eternal purity as if it were the eternal purity of the ignorant eternalist view,"[35] but the end result is the same.

According to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s condemnation of holding particular views, no one should prefer one condition over another, for to do so is to discriminate, desire, and grasp. This is where the critical value of this position lies, because it points out the paradox inherent in the very ideal of desirelessness. The *Mahāniddesa*'s comment on v. 900 spells out the Theravāda treatment of this issue, by claiming that one must desire in order to become desireless. Commenting on the lines

> Not longing for purity (or) impurity,
> one should fare detached, not having grasped calmness,[36]

it states that persons training for the highest goal first long for entry into the path. Having accomplished that, they then long for the highest goal, arahantship. But arahants themselves do not long for any of the things called "purity" or "impurity."

This hierarchy interprets accomplishment of the goal according to the idea that training in the path is to arahantship what pre-path entry is to path training. It thus renders the transition from less than ideal to ideal parallel to the initial taking up of the path. This reasoning transforms the original, uncompromising anti-*diṭṭhi* argument's condemnation of discriminating anything as ideal compared to anything else into the observation that one does not desire what one has already attained. Ordinary persons want to enter the path; those who have accomplished that desire the next step: arahantship. But arahants have attained the ultimate goal, so there is nothing left for them to desire.

This amounts to saying that the ideal person's lack of desire is merely an incidental consequence of her/his attainment of the ideal. In the context of v. 900, this comment interprets the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s negative assessment of longing for purity, as distinct from impurity, as the claim that once one has attained purity, one no longer desires it as distinct from its opposite. But this interpretation certainly does not condemn the trainees' desire for this specific ideal condition. On the contrary, it

indicates that the trainees' desire is necessary and effective. Finally, where the original verse says one should not grasp calmness, the *Mahāniddesa* takes "calmness" to connote a limited, nonideal calmness rather than the true highest calmness, which we can infer is a legitimate object of longing for those training on the path to it.

The *Aṭṭhakavagga* simply presents two approaches to the ideal without any attempt to resolve the inconsistencies that result. To explain the teaching recorded in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as true (consistent, coherent), the *Mahāniddesa* and the *Paramaṭṭhajotikā II* must somehow integrate both approaches. The two commentaries accomplish this in similar ways. In some of their definitions of the ideal person, and in their comments on certain anti-*diṭṭhi* verses, the commentaries superficially preserve the basic tension introduced by the anti-*diṭṭhi* position's negative critique of desire for anything, including the ideal goal. But for the most part the commentaries relegate such paradoxical elements of the Buddhist teaching to the realm of the perfected ideal person.

In this interpretation, the notion of pure desirelessness belongs to the ideal alone. Persons who have not yet achieved the ideal desire it as a matter of course. The commentators appear to assume that the fact that this may be paradoxical has no practical bearing on the path to the goal. It is for these aspirants to the goal that the commentaries define all paths, teachings, teachers, and goals other than their own as less than ideal, and their own as ideal. Similarly, the *Mahāniddesa* and the *Paramaṭṭhajotikā II* seem to assume that ideal persons may indeed have no need to express the truth, over and above the views of others. But the Buddha and his followers, who are interested in sharing their accomplishments with others, must do so by teaching the truth and by instilling a desire for the ideal in their followers. Thus the commentaries pay lip service to the anti-*diṭṭhi* claims while, at a deeper level, they radically transform this teaching by means of a "present company excepted" interpretation.

Theravāda Soteriology and the Paradox of Desire

The *Aṭṭhakavagga* both teaches a basic Buddhist soteriology, oriented toward the gradual elimination of desire, and presents—in its anti-*diṭṭhi* argument—an effective challenge to the legitimacy of any soteriology. This juxtaposition of views in an early Buddhist text is of historic interest, in part because it renders questionable the traditional Theravāda claim to preservation and consistent interpretation of the earliest version of the teachings of the Buddha. More significantly, this text, accepted and revered by the Theravāda as the word of the Buddha, clearly anticipates one of the most significant challenges the Mahāyāna would issue, centuries later, to the Theravāda understanding of the highest ideal and the path to it. Applying the paradox of desire, this cri-

mental condemnation of desirous attachment to all objects and conditions. If desire is characteristic of less-than-ideal persons and is left behind by ideal persons, how can desire for the ideal goal be salvific? The core of this critical application of the paradox of desire lies in the claim that every exclusive formulation of truth is an expression of selfish attachment that mistakenly posits a distinction between "true" and "false." Thus no one view (or teacher, practice, teaching, etc.) can distinguish itself as exclusively true.

It was Nāgārjuna, of course, who took up this argument anew in his formulation of the Mādhyamika interpretation of the Buddha's teachings. There he criticized the Theravāda (and other pre-Mahāyāna schools) for ignoring this important implication of the Buddha's teachings. Using his famous negative dialectic, Nāgārjuna interpreted those teachings as advocating a negative critique of all conceptual constructions; he argued that this negative critique does not thereby make its own specific conceptual claims. Thus he took the Buddha's teachings to be special by virtue of their ability to point toward a higher truth, without taking them to be conceptually substantial or exclusive. The *Aṭṭhakavagga* clearly presents the setup of this critique in its anti-*diṭṭhi* argument, adamantly condemning any attachment to exclusive individual views, but it does not anticipate Nāgārjuna's resolution of the problem.[37] Instead, it simply records two paths to the goal—one that focuses on eliminating desire by means of cultivating specific types of behavior, following the example of certain ideal persons, and another that recommends the elimination of desire by complete disassociation from any particular view, path, teacher, or goal. It includes no attempt to integrate the two into one coherent path.

It is impossible to determine, by analyzing the *Aṭṭhakavagga* itself, any chronological or even theoretical/doctrinal sequence of the development of these two approaches to the goal. Although we can speculate that one of the teachings follows logically on the other, the internal evidence provides no clear, objective basis for distinguishing which teaching precedes the other historically. Further, one certainly cannot presume to conclude from a study of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* alone whether either or both of these views actually represents the authentic teaching of the Buddha.

An analysis of the contents and structure of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* does show that one sample of what could be the earliest layer of Buddhist literature records a doctrinal conflict of the sort that proves quite significant in the later history of Buddhism. The *Aṭṭhakavagga* contains both the basic ideas of what would become a full-fledged soteriology in the Theravāda tradition, and the seeds of the attitude toward views and particular teachings that Nāgārjuna, for one, would later develop into a new Buddhist philosophy, and that the Zen masters would apply somewhat ruthlessly to their would-be disciples.[38] In a certain sense, even the Pure Land schools of Buddhism address the question of how one can act effectively to attain the highest goal, given the practical quandary posed by the paradox of desire.[39] In other words, an analysis of the soteriological stance(s) of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* indicates that one point of doctrinal disagreement that would later divide the major schools of Buddhism may date from the earliest layer of this tradition.

Tracing the development of the Theravāda response to the anti-*diṭṭhi* challenge raised by the *Aṭṭhakavagga* through examination of the two major normative Theravāda commentaries on this text, we have found evidence of some development of the Theravāda path soteriology, and in this development we have discovered the Theravāda resolution of the paradox of desire. As we have seen, this paradox, raised implicitly by the presence of the anti-*diṭṭhi* argument in the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, lies in the observation that any effort to become desireless itself belies a very basic desire: to attain this ideal of desirelessness. The commentaries' treatment of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s anti-*diṭṭhi* argument shows that the Theravāda generally finds the full anti-*diṭṭhi* response to this quandary untenable. To accept fully that resolution of the paradox of desire would require that it neither regard the Buddha as exemplary nor espouse his teachings as ultimately accurate and normative.

The Theravāda clearly did not recognize this solution—which would leave one with no path to the goal—as a solution at all. Instead, the commentaries opt to undermine the anti-*diṭṭhi* position, in order to retain the example of the Buddha and the guidance of his teachings. They accept the teachings concerning the path and the goal literally, and in the process accept the paradox inherent in them. This is exemplified by the *Mahāniddesa*'s comment on v. 900 of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, which explains that trainees for the ideal aspire for entrance to the path and that entrants to the path long for arahantship, but that arahants do not hold anything as ideal. This implies that desire for the goal is a necessary part of the path to it, and also that those who desire anything other than path entry or arahantship (and thus nibbāna) do not qualify as Buddhist trainees; they are common folk whose objects of desire are less worthy than these. Such lower goals constitute the desire that entraps one in the less-than-ideal condition, while the higher desire, for attainment of the ideal goal, actually helps to raise one from that condition.[40]

Although it weakens the condemnation of desire that lies at the base of the early Buddhist worldview, this Theravāda resolution of the paradox of desire proves successful, philosophically speaking.[41] Challenged to show why preference for the teaching of one particular person (the Buddha) should be a good tendency when that teaching itself denounces desire as the root of all evil and such preference as a form of desire, the Theravāda eventually replies: because it is effective. Theoretically, this

may be paradoxical, but it is not contradictory, and from a practical point of view, it is realistic. In practice, such preference is conducive to attainment of the highest good, which renders it—by definition—good.

Thus analysis of the *Aṭṭhakavagga* reveals that, although the Theravāda tradition's historical claims to the sole possession and only accurate interpretation of the earliest teachings of the Buddha may be questioned, its response to this particular, philosophically problematic issue manages to resolve it. When faced with the *Aṭṭhakavagga*'s evidence that the Buddha taught two incompatible teachings, the Theravāda opted for one and reinterpreted the other so as to contradict its original intent, thus rendering it consistent with what the Theravāda saw as the greater whole of the teaching.

The power of the Theravāda argument for this somewhat radical measure derives from its direct link with the experiential or empirical basis of Buddhist doctrine.[42] The paradox of desire relates, at least potentially, to every person's experience of the path to the highest goal. The Theravāda resolves that, paradoxical though it may be, the effectiveness of this path is proven by the successful practice of exemplary persons who have followed it. The paradox of desire challenges the very purpose of any path in Buddhism. The Theravāda treats this as a practical challenge that calls for a practical resolution.

Notes

1. With the possible exception of some Tibetan Buddhists, who accept all of the recorded scriptures of the Theravāda (and other "Hīnayāna" schools), Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna as the authentic record of the Buddha's words, "All the canonical Sūtras and Tantras which form the basis of Buddha-dharma in Tibet were taught by Lord Buddha in person" (His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the XIVth Dalai Lama of Tibet, *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye* [Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House, 1966], 10.) But even the great Vajrayāna philosophers of Tibet used later teachings to remedy the deficiencies of earlier texts.

2. See M. Anesaki, "Sutta-Nipāta in Chinese," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 5 (1906–1907): 50–51, and N. A. Jayawickrama, "The Vaggas of the Sutta Nipāta," *University of Ceylon Review* 6 (October 1948): 236.

3. See Jayawickrama, "Vaggas," pp. 229–232.

4. See Sylvain Lévi, *Journal Asiatique* (1915): 401ff.; Anesaki, "Sutta-Nipāta," pp. 50–51; and Jayawickrama, "Vaggas," pp. 233–235 for examples and discussions of such references.

5. In this analysis, the terms "goal," "purpose," "ideal condition," and the like represent the condition that the text portrays as ultimately good, the summum bonum for which one should strive. Also, "positive" and "negative" in this context refer to "good" and "bad," respectively, judged by comparison to this ideal.

6. *Nibbānam attano.* There is no explicit reference to the Buddhist doctrine of anattā. When the term *"atta"* appears, it either functions reflexively (as in this example) or connotes something taken up, an assumption. Cf. N. A. Jayawickrama, "Sutta Nipāta: Some Suttas from the Aṭṭhaka Vagga," *University of Ceylon Review* 8 (October 1950): 248, 249. In my translations, I have used forms that avoid the assumption that the persons (whether ideal or less than ideal) referred to in these verses are male. I can find no indication in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* that any of these descriptions or pieces of advice apply exclusively to males.

7. V. 915cd: *Kathaṃ disvā nibbāti bhikkhu/anupādiyāno lokasmiṃ kiñci.* Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Pali in this essay are my own. Despite the recent plethora of translations of the *Sutta-nipāta*, I still find V. Fausböll's literal and straightforward early translation most useful (*The Sutta-Nipāta: A Collection of Discourses,* Sacred Books of the East, vol. 10, pt. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon, 1881]). Of the newer translations, H. Saddhatissa's is the most readable and K. R. Norman's the most interesting for its presentation of possible variant translations (*The Sutta-Nipāta,* trans. H. Saddhatissa [London: Curzon, 1985]; *The Rhinoceros Horn and Other Early Buddhist Poems (Sutta Nipāta),* trans. K. R. Norman, with alternative translations by I. B. Horner and Walpola Rahula [London: Pali Text Society, 1984].)

8. The translations offered parenthetically come from the literal meaning of these terms, where this can be surmised. In many cases, they are adjectives functioning as substantives, which makes literal interpretation of them possible. The terms that seem to refer to these persons *qua* exemplary persons pose a more difficult translation problem. "Bhikkhu," "brāhmaṇa," and *"samaṇa"* convey no clear literal meaning and thus must be taken to signify something like "monk," "wanderer," "ascetic," or "recluse." Jayawickrama argues that *"dhona"* cannot mean "wise one," as the commentaries interpret it (see "Some Suttas from the Aṭṭhaka Vagga," pp. 247–248). For a definition and etymology of *"nāga,"* see A. F. Hoernle, "The Sutta Nipata in a Sanskrit Version from Eastern Turkestan," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1916): 722–723.

9. *Mattaṃ so jaññā idha tosanatthaṃ* (v. 971b).

10. See, e.g., vv. 809, 862, 866, and 951. Only the *Mahāviyūhasutta* fails to mention any of this type of recommendation.

11. Cf. Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of Indian Philosophies* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 259:

> So accepted is the distinction between egoism and altruism that it hardly seems possible to question its legitimacy. Yet the Indians did not recognize this distinction as particularly important and certainly not as obvious. Their assumption is that the good of all is served by the enlargement of a person's concern for himself, for his self eventually encompasses all selves.

In the specifically Theravāda Buddhist context, it would be more accurate to say that the good of all is served by the person's seeing to his or her own improvement, both because one cannot truly help anyone else until one sees the true nature of reality and because the conditions of all individuals are interdependent. Cf. Roy Perrett, "Egoism, Altruism and Intentionalism in Buddhist Ethics," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 15 (1987): 71–85.

12. V. 781: *Sakaṃ hi diṭṭhiṃ katham accayeyya/chandānunīto ruciyā niviṭṭhaṃ/sayaṃ samattāni pakubbamāno/yathā hi jāneyya tathā vadeyya.*

13. V. 796: *Paraman ti diṭṭhīsu paribbasāno/yad uttariṃ kurute jantu loke/hīnā ti aññe tato sabba-m-āha/tasmā vivādāni avītivatto.*

14. V. 969ab: *Paññaṃ purakkhatvā kalyāṇapīti/vikkhambhaye tāni parissayāni.*

15. V. 800ab: *Attaṃ pahāya anupādiyāno/ñāṇe pi so nissayam no karoti.*

16. V. 909: *Passaṃ naro dakkhiti nāmarūpaṃ/disvāna vāññassati tāni-m-eva/kāmaṃ bahuṃ passatu appakaṃ vā/na hi tena suddhiṃ kusalā vadanti.*

18. Cf. Luis O. Gómez, "Proto-Mādhyamika in the Pali Canon," *Philosophy East and West* 26 (April 1976), n. 55.

19. Ibid., p. 146.

20. Cf. ibid., n. 57: "this 'choicelessness' creates a problem for the formulation of directives in the path."

21. Cf. ibid., p. 146.

22. Cf. A. L. Herman's description of this paradox ("A Solution to the Paradox of Desire in Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 29 [January 1979]: 91): "If I desire to cease desiring then I have not ceased all desire after all; I have merely replaced one species of desiring by another. The paradox of desire points to the practical contradiction or frustration involved in the desire to stop all desiring and states simply that those who desire to stop all desiring will never be successful."

23. This problem is evident in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* terminology of desire. In v. 963 the trainee for the ultimate goal is called *sambodhikāma* (desirous of enlightenment), lending one of the primary terms for desire in this text (*kāma*) a positive significance. Cf. the *Kāmasutta* (vv. 766–771), where all desire is deemed unsuitable and no such allowance for a nīddetr term (i.e., desire *for something*) is made.

24. For more on this topic, see Grace G. Burford, *Desire, Death, and Goodness: The Conflict of Ultimate Values in Theravāda Buddhism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1991), esp. chaps. 5 and 7.

25. V. 781: *Sakaṃ hi diṭṭhiṃ katham accayeyya/chandānunīto ruciyā nivissho/sayaṃ samattāni pakubbamāno/yathā hi jāneyya tathā vadeyya.*

26. *Sassato loko, idam eva saccaṃ mogham aññaṃ, asassato loko, antavā loko, anantavā loko, taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ, aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ, hoti tathāgato paraṃmaraṇā, na hoti tathāgato paraṃmaraṇā, hoti ca na ca hoti tathāgato paraṃmaraṇā, n' eva hoti na na hoti tathāgato paraṃmaraṇā, idam va saccaṃ, mogham aññan ti.*

27. *Ayaṃ satthā sabbaññū, ayaṃ dhammo svākkhāto, ayaṃ gaṇo supaṭipanno, ayaṃ diṭṭhi bhaddikā, ayaṃ paṭipadā supaññattā, ayaṃ maggo niyyāniko ti.* It is interesting to note that the specific claims the *Mahāniddesa* attributes to these less-than-ideal viewholders include most of the same areas in which inconsistencies arise in the *Aṭṭhakavagga* as a result of its teaching of the *diṭṭhi* position: teacher, teaching (dhamma), path.

28. Here the commentary offers a standard string of synonyms for the verb.

29. *Brāhmaṇo aññena asuddhimeggena micchāpaṭipadāya aniyyānapathena aññatra satipaṭṭhānehi aññatra sammappadhānehi aññatra iddhipādehi aññatra indriyehi aññatra balehi aññatra bojjhaṅgehi aññatra ariyaṭṭhaṅgikamaggena, suddhiṃ visuddhiṃ pariyodhiṃ muttiṃ vimuttiṃ parimuttiṃ, n' āha na katheti na bhaṇati na dīpayati na voharati.*

30. At vv. 784a, 785b, 801d, 803b, 837b, 907b.

31. *Sabbe saṃkhārā aniccā; sabbe saṃkhārā dukkhā; sabbe dhammā anattā; avijjāpaccayā saṃkhārā; saṃkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ; viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ; nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ; saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso; phassapaccayā vedanā; vedanāpaccayā taṇhā; taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ; upādānapaccayā bhavo; bhavapaccayā jāti; jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ; avijjānirodhā saṃkhāranirodho; saṃkhāranirodhā viññāṇanirodho; viññāṇanirodhā nāmarūpanirodho; nāmarūpanirodhā saḷāyatananirodho; saḷāyatananirodhā phassanirodho; phassanirodhā vedanānirodho; vedanānirodhā taṇhānirodho; taṇhānirodhā upādānanirodho; upādānanirodhā bhavanirodho; bhavanirodhā jātinirodho; jātinirodhā jarāmaraṇanirodho; idaṃ dukkhaṃ; ayaṃ dukkhasamudayo; ayaṃ dukkhanirodho; ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā; ime āsavā; ayaṃ āsavasamudayo; ayaṃ āsavanirodho; ayaṃ āsavanirodhagāminī paṭipadā; ime dhammā abhiññeyyā, pariññeyyā, pahātabbā, bhāvetabbā, sacchikātabbā.*

32. See n. 16 above.

33. *Yo āyaṃ paracittañāṇādhi adakkhi so passan naro dakkhiti nāmarūpaṃ tato paraṃ disvāna vāññassati tāni-m-eva nāmarūpāni niccato sukhato vā na aññathā; so evaṃ passanto kāmaṃ bahuṃ passatu appakaṃ vā nāmarūpaṃ niccato sukhato ca ath' assa evarūpena dassanena na hi tena suddhiṃ kusalā vadanti.*

34. *Accantasuddhī ti anaccantasuddhiṃ saṃsāravisuddhiṃ akiriyasuddhiṃ sassatavādaṃ.*

35. *Paramattha-accantasuddhiṃ yena akiriyassassataditthi accantasuddhī ti na te vadanti.* Literally: they do not call highest eternal purity "unwise eternal view eternal purity."

36. V. 900cd: *Suddhī asuddhī ti apatthayāna/virato care santim anuggahāya.*

37. Cf. Gómez, "Proto-Mādhyamika," p. 149.

38. The contemporary Thai Buddhist reformer Buddhadāsa also seems to espouse the anti-*diṭṭhi* notion, as well as its problematic ramifications, within the Theravāda path to the ideal. See Donald K. Swearer, "Bhikkhu Buddhadāsa on Ethics and Society," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7 (Spring 1979): 60.

39. Cf. Alfred Bloom, *Shinran's Gospel of Pure Grace* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965), 30: "Shinran came to the conclusion that it was entirely impossible for a person to do a good act. Whatever good deed he appeared to do on the finite level was still evil, because it was done with a calculation in mind and was ultimately intended to redound to his benefit. Thus all good deeds performed by individuals were seen as essentially self-centered and involved in the entire web of passion."

40. This distinction is spelled out in the *Ariyapariyesana* (26th) sutta of the *Majjhimanikāya*, where desire for nibbāna is said to be different from desire for all other (i.e., conditioned) objects. Unlike desire for anything conditioned, desire for the unconditioned (nibbāna) is a desire *(ariya)* desire.

41. Cf. Herman, "A Solution," p. 92, where he rejects this resolution "because Buddhists themselves seem to reject it" in all its forms and functions.

42. Cf. the equally practical (and paradoxical), if different, Zen resolution described in ibid., pp. 92–94.

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Views of Householders and Lay Disciples in the *Sutta Piṭaka*: A Reconsideration of the Lay/Monastic Opposition

JEFFREY SAMUELS

Many scholars have argued that early Buddhism was primarily an 'other-worldly' religion focusing on ascetics and monastics. In their view, the laity does not figure prominently, it was only centuries later that the laity's involvement became more noticeable. By examining references to householders (*gahapati*) and lay disciples (*upāsaka*) in the *Sutta Piṭaka* section of the Pāli canon, this article challenges the view that the role of the laity primarily pertained to supporting the monastics with food, clothing, and shelter.

The traditional scholarly view of Theravāda Buddhism has always maintained a sharp distinction between the monastic and the lay communities. The distinction between these two communities is most often based on their religious activities and obligations. While the monastics are often identified as preservers of Buddhist doctrine and practice, the responsibilities and concerns of the laity are believed to be limited to the accumulation of merit through supporting the monastics with food, shelter, and clothing. For instance, Nalinaksha Dutt, in paraphrasing N. N. Law, excludes the laity from the religious practices associated with the monastics when he writes: 'The principles of early Buddhism did not make any special provision for the laity . . . [and] it is evident that the new religion [i.e., Buddhism] was primarily meant for those who would retire from the household life'.[1]

Another scholar who excludes the laity from the various forms of Buddhist learning and practice (besides donating to the monastic community) is Max Weber. He maintains, for instance, that the laity was viewed in a manner 'similar to the tolerated infidels in Islam, [who] existed only for the purpose of sustaining by alms the Buddhist disciple who aspires to the state of grace'.[2] The laity's support of the monks and nuns, according to Weber, 'constituted the highest merit and honor available to the *upasaka* (adorer)'.[3] Similarly, Etienne Lamotte, in his *History of Indian Buddhism*, writes that the 'monk aims at Nirvāṇa and, in order to attain it, wearing the yellow robe, cultivates the noble eightfold Path (*ārya aṣṭāṅgikamārga*)'.[4] While the monk strives to reach enlightenment or *nirvāṇa*, the lay householder, 'involved in the troubles of his time, cannot be expected to grasp "the profound truth, which is difficult to perceive, difficult to understand, sublime, abstruse and which only the wise can grasp" '.[5]

Many later scholars continue to embrace this traditional view of Theravāda Buddhism. For instance, Akira Hirakawa writes that 'The term "*upāsaka*" [i.e., layman] refers to one who waits upon or serves (another person). Thus an *upāsaka* served mendicants by supplying the items, such as food and robes, that they required for their religious lives'.[6] Hirakawa then even more sharply divides the monastics from the laity when he argues that early Buddhism is 'a monastic teaching for those who were willing to leave their homes to become monks or nuns, strictly observe the precepts, and perform religious practices'.[7] He also states that, 'Both doctrinal study and religious practice presupposed the abandonment of a person's life as a householder. A strict line separated those who had been ordained from lay people'.[8] Because of this sharp

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position between the monastic order and the laity, Hirakawa argues that 'Buddhist laymen were not included in the Buddhist *saṅgha*'.[9]

Finally, this depiction of Buddhism is also maintained by George Bond, who writes that archaic Buddhism (as represented in the Pāli canon) is 'a religion of individual salvation-striving for ascetic monks'.[10] While Bond acknowledges that Buddhism became markedly more social as time progressed,[11] he argues that the most that the laity could ever hope for and cultivate was a higher degree of morality (*adhisīla*): in order to cultivate higher wisdom (*adhipaññā*) and higher concentration (*adhisamādhi*), they had to abandon the household life.[12]

While the dominant view of early Buddhism still maintains a sharp distinction between the monastic order and the laity, some scholars have begun to challenge that perception. For instance, Gregory Schopen's work on early donative inscriptions in India questions this view by demonstrating that a considerable proportion of people who donated to sacred sites and were involved in merit-making activity were monks and nuns, including monks and nuns who were doctrinal specialists.[13] As a result of the evidence from early donative inscriptions, Schopen concludes that 'None of this accords very well, if at all, with received views on the matter, with the views that maintain that there was a sharp distinction between the kinds of religious activities undertaken by monks and the kinds of religious activity undertaken by laymen, and with the view that cult and religious giving were essentially and overwhelmingly lay concerns in the Indian Buddhist context'.[14]

In this article, I also challenge the dominant view of Theravāda Buddhism that maintains a sharp dichotomy between the monastic order and the laity and that appears to be based on a rather limited reading of the Pāli canon. By examining the *sutta* section of the Theravāda Buddhist Pāli canon, I hope to show that the portrayal of the laity in these early texts is not limited to *merely* providing the monks and nuns with food, shelter and clothing. Alongside references in the Pāli canon that depict the laity's primary role as supporters of the monastics are a plethora of references in which householders and lay disciples are portrayed as practitioners of the Buddha's *dhamma*, proceeding along on the path to enlightenment. I argue that the Pāli canon contains a historically diverse group of viewpoints and attitudes towards religious practice and that the complexity of views contained in the canon actually undermines, to a large degree, the absoluteness of the categories of 'monastic' and 'laity'.[15]

Views toward Lay people in the Sutta Piṭaka

A close examination of the passages in the *Sutta Piṭaka* that refer to householders and lay people reveals a complex and multifarious depiction. These findings reflect two opposing views: 1) that the laity, as an important dimension of the Buddhist community (*saṅgha*, primarily functioned to serve and support the monks and nuns; and 2) that the laity were able to progress along the path to enlightenment by hearing Buddhist teachings and practicing certain forms of Buddhist mediation. Though the first view appears to coincide with the traditional reading of the Pāli canon, the second view challenges that reading.

Laity as Supporters of Monastics: the Superiority of Monastics

There are numerous passages in the Pāli canon lending support to the traditional interpretation of Theravāda Buddhism. In these passages, lay life is portrayed as inferior to monastic life, which is shown to be more conductive to progressing towards

enlightenment. For example, in a passage in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* (or Fruits of the Wanderer), householder life is described as full of hindrances (*saṃbādho gharāvāso rajāpatho*), thereby making it difficult for householders to live the celibate life which is pure, complete and perfect.[16] In this passage, a homeless person is portrayed as one who renounces all worldly ties, practices mindfulness and contentment, enters into and remains in the trance states, develops supernatural powers, and knows that the cycle of death and rebirth is cut off. What this passage suggests, then, is that the qualities conducive towards attaining enlightenment—for example, developing mindfulness and concentration—can only be cultivated after renouncing household life.[17] The superiority of monastics over householders is also suggested in the *Sutta Nipāta* (v. 221), where it is stated that 'just as a blue-necked peacock, flying through the air, never attains the speed of a goose, thus the householder does not imitate the monk who is a sage meditating in the forest'.

Though the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* primarily focuses on the benefits of homeless life, it also contains a description of the actions and teachings appropriate for lay people. For instance, after stating that household life is full of hindrances, we read that a graduated sermon on giving, morality and heaven was given to the householder.[18] Moreover, in other *suttas* in the Pāli canon, there are individual discourses on the subjects of giving and morality taught to lay people,[19] and these discourses often include a description of the rewards that ensue from such practices.[20]

Lay Involvement

While these passages from various sections of the *Sutta Piṭaka* lend support to the traditional reading of the Pāli canon, other passages challenge the view that the highest function of the laity is to support the monks and nuns, and that progress to the goal can only be accomplished through abandoning the householder state. These *suttas* challenge the traditional view of Theravāda Buddhism by their portrayal of the laity as recipients of profound teachings on Buddhist doctrine and as practitioners of Buddhist training. There are even passages in which the laity are placed on an equal footing with monastics in terms of spiritual attainment.

Recipients of Teachings and Teachers of the Doctrine

Though it is true that a number of passages in the *Sutta Piṭaka* pertaining to householders portray them as recipients of discourses solely on morality and giving, other passages portray them as receiving the same profound doctrinal discourses as monastics. In one *sutta* in the *Paṭisaṃbhidāmagga* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, the *Mahāvagge Maṇḍapeyya-kathā*, we read that the best recipients of the Buddha's best teachings (*desanāmaṇḍo*) include monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen and gods. Similarly, in the *Nagarasutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (II.107), the Buddha talks about his insight into conditioned arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) and the eightfold path, and then concludes by pointing out that having come to this knowledge, he has taught it to monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. Finally, in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (II.132), there is a statement that Ānanda (as well as the Buddha)[21] taught the *dhamma* to each of the four assemblies, monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen.

Two components of the best teachings of the Buddha given to the laity, highlighted in the *Mahāvagge Maṇḍapeyya-kathā*, are the four noble truths and the eightfold path.[22] The fact that these teachings were given to the laity is further supported by other passages in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. For instance, we read in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (I.110) that after giving a graduated sermon to the brahmin Pokkharasāti, the Buddha then explained the

dhamma in brief: suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path. A similar phrase is also found in conjunction with the laymen Kūṭadanta (D I.148), Upāli (M I.380) and Brahmāyu (M II.145). Moreover, in the *Rāsiyasutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, we find that the headman Rāsiya became a lay disciple by taking refuge in the Buddha, his doctrine and the monastic community after hearing a discourse from the Buddha on the eightfold path.[23]

Other Buddhist doctrines that were of central importance and were sometimes taught to householders include the five aggregates and non self (*anattā*). In the *Nakulapitāsutta* (S III. 1ff.), for example, the old and ailing householder Nakula visits the Buddha and Sāriputta and asks for some comforting teachings. Rather than discussing with the householder the importance of faith, the benefits of being moral and the rewards of giving, the Buddha and Sāriputta teach Nakula about the five aggregates and how each of the five aggregates is not to be construed as the self or as being possessed by a self. In another *sutta* of the same Nikāya (S III.48ff.), moreover, we find a Socratic-like dialogue ensuing between the Buddha and the householder Soṇa on the subject of the five aggregates and non self. In this dialogue, which mirrors the conversation between the Buddha and his first five converts, the Buddha leads the layman Soṇa to the conclusion that the five aggregates are not to be taken to be the self or the self taken as the possessor of the five aggregates.

In addition, there are *suttas* that portray the Buddha teaching lay householders and brahmins about the abstruse doctrine of the twelve links of dependent originatiou (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). In the Nidāna section of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (II.22ff., 75f., 76f., and 77ff.) for example, there are a number of *suttas* addressed to lay people pertaining to the doctrine of dependent origination. In these cases, the householders and brahmins become lay followers after hearing the discourse on the causal relationship between each of the links as well as the way to break out of this chain binding one to rebirth and suffering (S II. 76).

Another manner in which the laity are portrayed in the *Sutta Piṭaka* is as teachers of the Buddhist doctrine. For instance, in the section of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that recounts the achievements of certain laymen and laywomen (A I.126), we read that Citta is chief among the Buddha's laymen in terms of teaching the *dhamma* and that Khujjuttarā is foremost among the laywomen in terms of wide knowledge. Moreover, in the same nikāya we find references to two laymen, Anāthapiṇḍika and Vajjiyamāhita, who refuted the views of a group of wanderers by teaching them about dependent arising, impermanence, suffering, non clinging and non self. Their discourse on these subjects caused the wanderers to become speechless and led the Buddha to declare to his monks: 'A monk who dwells in the *dhamma* and *vinaya* for even one hundred years might, in this manner, have to censure heretical wanderers with the *dhamma* just as the ones who were rebuked by the householder Anāthapiṇḍika'.[24]

Another passage that describes lay people as *dhamma* teachers is found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and repeated in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. In this passage, Māra tries to encourage the Buddha to attain final *nibbāna* (*parinibbāna*). The Buddha responds that he can only attain *parinibbāna* after he has monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen

> who are learned, trained, self-possessed, who have great knowledge, who know the *dhamma* by heart, who have reached complete righteousness, who are upright, who walk in perfect conformity, who are their own teacher, and who, *having learned [the dhamma], will describe it, teach it, declare it, give it, uncover it, dissect it, and will declare it to those who have arisen, who, having restrained and checked those who are in opposition with the teachings, will teach the marvelous dhamma.*[25]

These passages, thus pose a challenge to some of the traditional distinctions made between the monastic order and the laity. For instance, while Dutt argues that 'householders were as far as possible kept away from the deeper teachings, lest they should be frightened away from taking interest in the religion',[26] and while Hirakawa states that 'Nikāya Buddhist doctrine was a monastic teaching for those who were willing to leave their homes to become monks or nuns',[27] the passages quoted reveal that the Buddhist attitudes expressed in the Pāli canon are far more complex than that 'monastic' versus 'lay'. In particular, the passages that refer to Citta as the foremost of the Buddha's disciples in terms of teaching the *dhamma*, to Khujjuttarā as the foremost of the Buddha's disciples in terms of wide knowledge, and to Anāthapiṇḍika and Vajjiyamāhita as having great understanding of dependent arising, impermanence, suffering, non clinging and non self all suggest that there might have existed, in the Pāli canon, some ambiguity over the very nature of 'monk' versus 'householder' in regards to doctrinal instruction and understanding.

Practicing Meditation

There are also several passages in the *Sutta Piṭaka* where certain lay people are portrayed as engaging in Buddhist practices, especially those practices directed towards the development of mindfulness and concentration.

While the cultivation of mindfulness through practicing the four foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is often associated with monastics (as it is in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta* of the *Dīgha and Majjhima nikāyas*),[28] there are also passages in the *Sutta Piṭaka* that show lay people following this same practice. For instance, in the *Kandarakasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (I.340), the Buddha points out to a wandering ascetic and a householder that his monks dwell in the four foundations of mindfulness. After the Buddha extols the virtues of the four foundations of mindfulness, the householder accompanying the wandering ascetic remarks, 'We householder, oh sir, dressed in white, also practice the four foundations of mindfulness from time to time'. In another *sutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (V.176ff.), the venerable Ānanda visits the sick and suffering layman Sirivaḍḍha. After they exchange greetings and Sirivaḍḍha informs Ānanda about his illness, Ānanda recommends that Sirivaḍḍha should practice the four foundations of mindfulness as follows: 'I will dwell contemplating the body, feelings, mind, and *dhammas* in the body, feelings, mind, and *dhammas* ardent, with energy and mindful'. The householder then retorts that he is already dwelling in the four foundations.[29]

Along with these passages in which there are several passages which lay people are shown to be proficient in entering into and remaining in the trance states. For instance, in the *Acelasutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the householder Citta who has been a disciple of the Buddha for thirty years, remarks to the naked ascetic Acela that he, Citta, is able to enter into the four trance states and is able to remain aloof from lust. In the *Dīgha Nikāya* (II. 186), moreover, we find reference to a king who is able to enter into the four trance states as well as cultivate the four divine abidings: compassion, friendliness, sympathetic joy and equanimity. In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (IV.66), there is mention of how Nanda's mother (Nandamātā) can enter into and remain in the four trance states. Finally, in the *Iddhikathā* of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya* (II.212), we find a discussion of the powers that ensue from abiding in the eight trance states. After this brief discussion, we find that the monks Sāriputta, Saṅjiva and Khāṇukoṇḍañña, as well as the laywomen Uttarā[30] and Sāmāvatikā, have all developed this power of pervasive concentration.

There are also references to lay people practicing other types of meditation in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. One example concerns a meditation focusing on the three characteristics of reality: impermanence, non self and suffering. In the *Dighāvusutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, for instance, the sick and suffering householder Dighāvu is visited by the Buddha. After inquiring about Dighāvu's health, the Buddha recommends that Dighāvu cultivate faith in the three jewels and cultivate noble virtues. Dighāvu then responds that he has already cultivated these qualities. The Buddha then instructs Dighāvu to practice six other practices: 'Now, oh Dighāvu, you should dwell observing impermanence in all constituent elements. [You should dwell] perceiving suffering in impermanence, perceiving non self in suffering, perceiving abandoning, perceiving the' absence of desire, perceiving cessation. This is how you should train yourself, oh Dighāvu'.[31] In others suttas, we also find references to a king who guards his senses and mind,[32] and to a group of householder brahmins who are being instructed on guarding the sense doors.[33]

Yet another *sutta* where meditative practices are taught to a layman is the *Anāthapiṇḍikovādasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, where Sāriputta instructs the dying Anāthapiṇḍika to practice non grasping in relation to the six senses (the five senses and the mind), the six forms (shape, sound, smell, tastes, touches and mental objects) and the six consciousness associated with each of the senses. In addition, Sāriputta remarks that Anāthapiṇḍika should not grasp after feelings as well as the last four trance states. After describing the various types of non grasping meditation, Sāriputta remarks that this kind of meditation is usually given not to householders but only to monks. In response, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika points out that this teaching should be given to other householders who have little dust in their eyes.[34]

Spiritual Attainments

By highlighting these passages in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, I hope to have shown that the sections of the Pāli canon that portray household life as full of hindrances are juxtaposed by passages in which householders are depicted as progressing towards enlightenment, as hearing and understanding profound teachings (such as non self and dependent origination) and as practicing various kinds of meditation. At this point, one question may be raised: while it is true that certain householders may 'progress' towards enlightenment and attain the first three fruits of the path (stream-enterer, once-returner and non returner), is it possible for them to attain complete freedom from suffering—i.e., to become an *arahant*? Unfortunately, there is not a single answer to this question, thereby further showing the complexity of views regarding the laity in the Pāli canon.

On the one hand there are may passages in the *Sutta Piṭaka* where the final stage of *arahantship* is shown to be unattainable by householders and where householders are depicted as having attained only the first three fruits of the path to enlightenment. In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* (D II.92f.), for example, the Buddha recalls those lay people who have become stream-enterers, once-returners and non returners; interestingly, there is no mention of fully enlightened lay people.[35] The *Nalakapānasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* (I.467) further supports the notion that one must become a monastic before attaining enlightenment. In this *sutta* the Buddha points out to Anuruddha the states attained by certain deceased people. First, the Buddha mentions the states attained by monks and nuns: having abandoned only the first three fetters (stream-enterer), having eliminated the first three fetters and reduced attachment, aversion and délusion (i.e., a once-returner), having eradicated the first five fetters (i.e., a non returner), and being

established in profound knowledge (i.e., *arahant*). This statement is followed by a discussion of the states attained by laymen and laywomen. However, there is only mention of the first three stages: stream-enterer, once-returner and non returner.[36] What is implied is that while monastics are able to reach all of the four fruits of the path, lay people are able to attain only the first three stages. Even though householders are able to progress along the path through hearing profound teachings and practicing meditation, the ultimate goal of cessation from suffering can be attained only by a monastic.

While these passages may lend support to the claim that the householder's life is 'ultimately' not conducive to spiritual progress and that lay people must abandon household life in order to cultivate higher wisdom and enlightenment, other passages suggest the contrary: that lay people can achieve the fourth fruit—*arahantship*. For example, in two *suttas* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the 'prospect' of lay people attaining complete release from suffering (*dukkha*) and from the mental intoxicants (*āsavas*) is acknowledged. In the *Mahānāmasutta*, for example, the layman Mahānāma asks the Buddha the difference between those lay people who are possessed with morality (*sīlasampanno*), those lay people who are possessed with faith (*saddhasampanno*), those lay people who are possessed with generosity (*cāgasampanno*) and finally, those lay people who are possessed with wisdom (*paññāsampanno*). This last group of lay people, the Buddha responds, are those who are possessed with insight into rising and falling (i.e., impermanence), who are possessed with wisdom which is noble, who are discriminating, and who are moving towards the complete destruction of suffering (i.e., enlightenment).[37] In this passage, there is neither a portrayal of a layperson's life as being replete with hindrances nor an assertion that a lay follower (*upāsaka*) must become a monastic.

Of even greater interest is the *Gilāyanasutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. In this *sutta*, the Buddha points out to the householder Mahānāma that lay people may be admonished to develop faith in the three jewels,[38] to develop noble virtues, and to eradicate all attachment to their parents, to their children, to the five senses, to the four godly realms and so on. Once the lay person eradicates all attachments, then the person should be instructed to direct the mind on the state of cessation (*nirodha*). The Buddha then points out that if the lay person is able to accomplish this feat, then there is no difference between the lay person and the monk who is freed from the āsavas (i.e., mental intoxicants preventing one from reaching enlightenment) and that there is no difference between the release of one and the release of the other.[39]

Another passage pertaining to the issue of whether lay people can become enlightened is in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, where Māra asks the Buddha to attain *parinibbāna*. Though this passage repeats the passage found in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, there is one addition: not only should there be monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen who are accomplished in the Buddhist teachings and can teach it to others, but there must also be monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen who have attained perfect peace (*pattayogakkhemā*)—a word that Rhys Davids and Stede refer to as a 'frequent epithet of nibbāna'.[40]

There are other passages in the *Majjhima*, *Saṃyutta* and *Aṅguttara Nikāyas* that correlate the attainment of *nibbāna* to lay people. In these passages another epithet for *nibbāna* is used: *ñāyaṃ*, or truth. In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, for instance, the Buddha purports to have said to his monks that when 'a householder or a wanderer is rightly disposed, because of [his] correct mental disposition he is accomplished in the truth (*ñāyaṃ*), the teachings (or the norm (*dhamma*)), and the wholesome'.[41] Though the word *ñāyaṃ*, or truth, may appear to be ambiguous in this phrase, certain post-canonical

texts gloss this word as a synonym for *nibbāna*. For example, in his *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa succinctly writes, '*Nāyo vuccati nibbānaṃ*' or 'Truth is called *nibbāna*'.[42] Moreover, in the *Questions to King Milinda*, King Milinda questions the monk Nagasena on this exact passage: 'if householders and monastics can realize the truth (*ñāyaṃ*), then why should one give up the householder's life?' Though Nagasena skirts Milinda's question at first by pointing out that the recluse is nonetheless superior because he attains the goal of *nibbāna* without delay,[43] he later remarks that the householder who is able to attain the highest peace of *nibbāna* is able to do so only because he has laid the groundwork in previous lives, when he followed the thirteen ascetic practices (*dhutaguṇas*).[44]

In addition to this *sutta*, we find other passages that even refer to lay people who are enlightened. For example, near the end of the third book of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, we find the following:

> Endowed with these six things, oh monks, the householder Tapussa who has attained perfection and who has seen nibbāna because of the Tathāgata, is one who has gone to the state of perfection having seen nibbāna with his own eyes; with which six: with perfect faith in the Buddha, with perfect faith in the *dhamma*, with perfect faith in the saṅgha, with noble morality, with noble knowledge, and with noble release. Because of these six things, oh monks, the householder Tapussa who has attained perfection and who has seen nibbāna because of the Tathāgata, is one who has gone to the state of perfection having seen nibbāna with his own eyes. (A III.450f.)

This same formula is then repeated for seventeen other householders (Bhallika, Sudatta Anāthapiṇḍika,[45] Citta Macchikāsaṇḍika, Hatthaka Āḷavaka, Mahānāma Sakka, Ugga Vesāḷika, Uggata, Sūra Ambaṭṭha, Jīvaka Komārabhacca, Nakulapitā, Tavakaṇṇika, Pūraṇa, Isidatta, Sandhāna, Vijaya, Vajjiyamāhita and Meṇḍaka) and three other lay disciples (Visaṭṭha, Aṭṭha and Sāragga).

If we take these passages seriously, then it appears that Gananath Obeyesekere (1968:28) might have had a rather limited reading of the Pāli canon when he asserted that 'Since *de facto* a layman is incapable of entering the true path, the *nirvana* quest is exclusively a phenomenon of elite religiosity'.[46] Though there are canonical passages that imply that lay people cannot become enlightened, these passages must be interpreted as applying only to particular situations. Certain lay people are shown, in the Pāli canon, to have attained the same degree of perfection as enlightened monks and nuns.

In highlighting the various passages pertaining to the laity in this paper, I am not arguing that the function of the laity did not include supporting monastics. I am arguing only that the Pāli canon contains a complex view of lay people and that the traditional limited reading of the Pāli canon misses this complexity. Moreover, the multifarious views of the lay community in the Pāli canon actually challenge the rigid categories of 'monastic' and 'laity'. While these two categories appear distinct and separate to us today, these two categories might have been more indistinct and less meaningful during the period represented in the Pāli canon. For instance, in some of the passages highlighted, the lay community, like the monastic community, is shown to be given profound teachings, to have practiced various forms of Buddhist meditation and to have reached the highest goal of the tradition—enlightenment.

If the two communities are less distinct in the period of the Pāli canon, then it might be fruitful to question when and under what circumstances did the sharp distinction first arise. Is it possible that the early centuries of Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its posturing about the superiority of its own path because it includes the laity, may have prompted

the Theravāda tradition to define itself against the Mahāyāna school by posturing a distinct opposition between the lay and monastic communities? While such a question lies beyond the scope of this article, it is worth further consideration.

Notes

1 Nalinaksha Dutt, 'Place of Laity in Early Buddhism', *Indian Historical Quarterly* 21, p. 163.
2 Max Weber, *The Religions of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*, trans. H. H. Gerth and D. Martindale, Glencoe, IL, Free Press 1958, p. 214. In a similar manner, Edward Conze denigrates the role of the laity in archaic Buddhism by referring to their beliefs and practices as '*bhaktic*' (i.e., devotional) and 'magical' (*Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy*, London, Allen and Unwin 1962, p. 32).
3 Weber, p. 214.
4 Etienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śaka Era*, trans. Sara Webb-Boin, Louvain-Paris, Peeters Press 1988, p. 67.
5 Ibid., p. 74.
6 Akira Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to Early Mahāyāna*, trans. Paul Groner, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press 1990, p. 61.
7 Ibid., p. 106.
8 Ibid., p. 105.
9 Ibid.
10 George Bond, *The Buddhism Revival in Sri Lanka: Religious Traditions, Reinterpretation and Response*, Columbia, University of South Carolina Press 1988, p. 23.
11 Ibid., p. 25.
12 Ibid., p. 27.
13 Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press 1997, p. 30.
14 Ibid., 31.
15 In this article, I am not arguing that the Pāli canon 'represents' early Buddhism. Rather, I am arguing that the Pāli canon contains all kinds of different ideas about the kinds of religious practices undertaken by the monastic order and the laity, and that this complexity undermines the common assumptions made regarding a strict monastic/lay opposition. I am not so concerned about the issue of the chronological layering of the texts. Instead, I am interested in looking at a body of texts (that Theravāda tradition has said belong together in some way) and examining what *the texts themselves* have to say on the issue of religious practitioners.
16 This phrase occurs numerous times in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. See, for instance, *Dīgha Nikāya* (hereafter D) 1.63, 100, 124, 147, 157, 171, 181, 206, 214, 232, 250; *Majjhima Nikāya* (hereafter M) 1.179; 267, 344, 412, 521; II.38, 162, 226; III.134; and *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (hereafter A) II. 208. All translations of passages from the Pāli canon are mine unless otherwise noted. All references to the canon are based on the Pāli Text Society's Pāli edition.
17 This point is also made in the *Raṭṭhapālasutta of the Majjhima Nikāya* (II.56), where the householder Raṭṭhapāla, while listening to a Buddhist discourse, comes to realise that the only way to practice the Buddha's teachings is to go forth into the state of homelessness. In a number of other *suttas*, the same point is made. For example, in the *Mahāvacchagottasutta* we find that only after Vacchagotta becomes a monk that he is taught by the Buddha about the two types of the meditative techniques that lead to enlightenment—*vipassanā* and *samatha*. While he was still a layman, however, the Buddha taught him only the importance of cultivating the 10 wholesome actions. Other *suttas* in which a discussion of the meditative and trance practices is limited only to monastics are the *Vesāli* and *Kāmabhū suttas* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* and the *Cūḷavedalla* and *Aṭṭhakanāgara suttas* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.
18 This idea of a gradual discourse is also found in D.I.148; II.41, 43, 44; A IV. 186, 209; M.I.379; and M.II.145; see, especially, A III.184, where the Buddha tells Ānanda that the gradual discourse on morality, giving and heaven should be given to lay people.
19 *Suttas* in which the importance of giving is established are the *Udāya*, *Devahita*, *Aputtaka* and *Puggala suttas* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (hereafter S), the *Apaṇṇakasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, as well as numerous passages in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (see, for example, A II.65, 391; III.39, 49,

336; and IV.62, 239). *Suttas* in which the Buddha teaches lay people about morality include the *Soṇadaṇḍa* and *Mahāparinibbāna suttas* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, the *Paccābhūmako*, *Veḷudvāreyyā*, *Puggala* and *Pañcaverabhayā suttas* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *Apaṇṇakasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, as well as several passages in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (see, for instance, A I.56, 57, 62; III.203ff., 247). In addition to discussing the fivefold moral code with lay people, the Buddha also points out to certain lay people that they should cultivate the ten wholesome actions (see for instance, the *Mahāvacchagotta* and *Esukāri suttas* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*).

20 The rewards correlated to giving and morality not only include attaining a favourable rebirth in heaven, but also becoming a stream-enterer, once-returner, and even a non returner. This idea becomes the central focus of the *Vimānavatthu* of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*.

21 A III.122 and A III.150.

22 *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, II.86ff. The other components of the 'best teachings' refer to the four foundations of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four special powers, the five faculties, the five powers, and the seven factors of enlightenment.

23 This often occurring phrase of refuge is as follows: 'I go to refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha; let the Blessed One take me who is going for refuge as a lay disciple from this day onward while still alive'.

24 A V. 189; this same story is repeated for Vajjiyamāhita in A V.192.

25 D II. 104ff.

26 Dutt, p. 178. Even though Dutt acknowledges certain householders who 'took greater and greater interest in Buddhist religion and philosophy', he is still drawn to the conclusion that the deeper and more profound Buddhist teachings were kept away from the householders. This same tendency to acknowledge lay adepts but then to under emphasize their place in the early Buddhist community is also present in the writings of Gananath Obeyesekere (see, for instance, 'Theodicy, Sin and Salvation in a Sociology of Buddhism', in E. R. Leach (ed.) *Dialectic in Practical Religion*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1968).

27 Hirakawa, p. 107. These passages also belie Hirakawa's (p. 62) view that when the term '*saṅgha*' was 'used in early Buddhist texts, it usually indicated only the two orders of mendicants . . The four groups of Buddhists were not referred to collectively as a single order (*saṅgha*)'. In the one section of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (I.23ff.), for example, laymen and laywomen are shown to make up 25 percent of the Buddha's community of 80 great Disciples (*sāvaka-saṅgha*).

28 In both *nikāyas*, for example, the audience to which the teaching of the four foundations of mindfulness is addressed is portrayed as consisting solely of monks.

29 In addition to these passages, there are also several reference in the *Sutta Piṭaka* which refer to lay people cultivating the quality of concentration (see, for instance, the *Saṅkha* (S IV 317ff.), and the *Brāhmaṇa* (S V.217ff.) *suttas*.

30 In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Uttarā is described as being the foremost laywoman in terms of meditative powers (A 1.26).

31 S V.345.

32 S IV.110ff.

33 S IV.116ff.

34 M III.258. Furthermore, in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (III.207) the Buddha suggests to Anāthapiṇḍika (who is shown to be surrounded by five hundred lay disciples), that he should abide, from time to time, in the joy of seclusion where he will not experience lust, pain and pleasure, and grief.

35 Similar passages may be found in the *Janavasabhasutta* (D II.218), the *Giñjakāvasathasutta* (S V.356 and 358) and the *Mahāvacchagottasutta* (M I.490).

36 In one section of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (V.83), there is also a passage in which only the first three fruits are described as being attainable by laymen and laywomen.

37 S V.395.

38 Though it is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth mentioning that even though the importance of cultivating faith is usually ascribed to laymen and laywomen, this is not supported by the textual data. For instance, we read that faith in the Buddha should be cultivated by monks, nuns and lay disciples (S V.161) and that monks, nuns and lay people should talk about the Buddha's qualities to increase faith (D III.116).

39 S V.410.

40 T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, *Pāli-English Dictionary*, New Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal 1989, p. 558. The complete canonical passage is as follows: 'I will not reach *nibbāna* as long as there will be no laymen disciples of mine who are learned, trained, self-possessed, who have attained perfect peace, who have great knowledge, who know the *dhamma* by heart, who have reached complete righteousness, who are upright, who walk in perfect conformity, who are their own teacher, and who, having learned [the *dhamma*], will describe it, teach it, declare it, give it, uncover it, dissect it, and will declare it to those who have arisen, who having restrained and checked those who are in opposition with the teachings, will teach the marvelous *dhamma*'.

41 S V.19; see also M II.197 and A I.69.

42 Vism., p. 219.

43 Miln., p. 342f.

44 Miln., p. 352.

45 This appears to be the same person mentioned in S V.380ff.

46 Obeyesekere, p. 28. This point is similarly made by Louis de La Vallée Poussin. 'Laymen, however faithful, generous and virtuous they may be, even if they practice the fortnightly abstinence and continence of the Upavāsa, cannot reach Nirvāṇa. The only Buddhist, in the proper meaning of the word, is the monk who has broken all the ties of society' (*The Way to Nirvāṇa: Six Lectures on Ancient Buddhism as a Discipline of Salvation*, India, Sri Satguru Publications 1917, pp. 150f.). Dutt attempts to straddle the fence on this issue by first acknowledging 'that there were exceptional cases of householders who became so spiritually advanced that they *deserved* arhathood' (p. 183, emphasis added), but by later, in agreement with Louis de La Vallée Poussin, arguing that 'the fourth fruit *arhatta* is not attained by any householder' as well as that 'Upāsakas like Citta and Hatthaka, and Upāsikās like Khajjuttarā and Nandamātā were more spiritually advanced than many monks and nuns, but still they were *sekhas* and not *asekhas* (= arhats)' (p. 182f.).

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Meditation as a Tool For Deconstructing the Phenomenal World

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Historians of Indian religion agree that in the time between the seventh and fifth centuries BC a fundamental change in the orientation of religious life occurred. Among various groups of religious thinkers, both orthodox and unorthodox, new theories developed about human action and its role in relation to repeated births and deaths. These thinkers' theories on how the world is constructed and kept in motion and the practical strategies they devised for deconstructing and immobilizing worldly activity have influenced all subsequent Indian religious thought. Some of these strategies rely upon a theoretical analysis of the psychological forces at work in the mind's development and expansion of its ideas about the world. One technique devised for calming the mind's frantic activity involves a type of meditative practice designed to curb the impact of sensory stimulation. In theory, control over the activity of the senses should lead to a meditative experience divested of all disruptive emotional content. This experience becomes central to religious practice, since such negative emotions as desire and hatred motivate the type of mental and physical actions that keep the cycle of birth, death and rebirth in motion.

Several Indian religious works, both of the orthodox brahmanical tradition and of the unorthodox traditions of Buddhists and Jains, use the expression *prapañca* (Pāli *papañca*) to refer to the world perceived and constructed as the result of disturbed mental states. In order to calm this unquiet world, these works advocate meditative practices that staunch the flow of normal sensory experience. In this paper I will examine what several of these religious texts say about the meditative practice of restraining the sense faculties and its function in halting *prapañca* and use this information to suggest a new interpretation of several verses in an early Buddhist text, the *Suttanipāta*. My discussion of these works, views on the origin and cessation of *prapañca* relies on two basic assumptions. One of these is that the language these works use to describe meditative practices reflects a serious attempt to describe actual experience. The second is that despite the similarity of these works' descriptions of meditative experience, the experience itself is not necessarily similar; and it is, of course, interpreted in terms of quite different religious beliefs.

The earliest *Rgveda* texts speak of altered states of consciousness which are clearly ecstatic in nature, and often attained through the use of the mind-altering substance, *soma*. Some of the philosophical texts collected in the tenth book of the *Artharvaveda*, however, seem to advocate an altered state of consciousness whose focal point is turned inwards. The composers of these texts speak of exemplary religious persons knowing a stable force at the center of an unstable world, which they call *brahman*. The term *brahman*, as Jan Gonda has pointed out, is a word whose multiple meanings are aspects of a core meaning of "inherent firmness, imperishable solidity", a meaning which remains constant throughout the term's occurence in divergent Vedic texts whose composition ranges over several centuries. The hymns of the *Rgveda* describe *brahman* as an animating and strengthening force; those of the tenth chapter of the *Artharvaveda* describe it as a pillar (*skambha*) which supports the world.[1] In a more recent study of the concept, Brian Smith faults Gonda for his failure to emphasize sufficiently the dynamic quality of *brahman*, the potency that is immanent in all names and forms. Smith following Louis Renou's lead in identifiying the "connective potency" of *brahman* as a basis for linking together its diverse applications, defines it as the connective energy that lies between disparate elements and makes efficacious the ritual action that forges those elements into a unity. *Brahman* is seen as the nexus that links all the multiple names and forms, "the resembling parts" with itself, the cosmic whole.[2] The brahmin priests—in whom *brahman* assumes bodily form—achieve power through their ability to recite ritual texts and manipulate divine power. They become, according to the *Artharvaveda* and other Vedic texts, gods on earth, with the special privileges of teaching ritual texts, officiating at sacrifices and accepting gifts as their religious duty.[3]

The opening verses in the eighth chapter of the tenth book of the *Artharvaveda* (X, 8, 1–2) begin with an invocation to *brahman*, described as a pillar (*skambha*) which holds in place heaven and earth. It is whole (*sarva*) and contains within itself a dynamic animating force, an *ātman*; it is a hidden force immanent in the world upon which everything that manifests life, that is to say, everything that breathes, moves, and blinks its eyes, depends.[4] This chapter's verses equate *brahman* with a powerful being (*mahat yakṣam*) in the centre of the world to whom rulers offer oblations.[5] Like the term *brahman*, the term *yakṣa* also, according to Louis Renou, retains throughout its occurence in Vedic texts an enigmatic, mysterious quality.[6] Those who know *brahman*, this *Artharvaveda* text (X, 8, 43) says, know also this mysterious *yakṣa*. They know that it is located in the body (metaphorically represented as a lotus) and that it also possesses the animating force of the *ātman*.[7] Renou believes that these *Artharvaveda* verses prove that the identity of *brahman* and the *ātman* is already an established fact well before the composition of the *Upaniṣads*[8] and he considers the term *yakṣa* to be nothing other than a "nom contourné de l'*ātman-brahman*".[9] The connections that appear to be obtained between these terms may not be precisely the kind of identity the *Upaniṣads* speak of when they refer to the identity of the individual self (*ātman*) and the ultimate ground of the cosmos (*brahman*)—the *Artharvaveda* passages reveal that both *brahman* and *yakṣa* possess *ātman* and possession is not the same kind of relationship as identity—but nonetheless *Artharvaveda* (X,73–38) indicates that there is a vital animating force embedded in the thread from which creatures are spun and through which they are all connected. Although the forms manifest in the world are multiple, the connective energy that supports the world is one.[10]

Knowledge of this one powerful being that is immanent in the flux of the multiple forms can be acquired through the performance of austerities (*tapas*). The *Artharvaveda* says: "The great being (*yakṣa*) in the midst of the world, behind the flux, is approached through austerities (*tapas*)."[11] Many scholars have pointed out that from the time of the *Rgveda* onward, the "heated effort" of asceticism yields insight into what had previously been hidden.[12] Certain Vedic rituals require the performers to engage in silent meditation, vigils by the sacrificial fire, and fasting, which generates the "heat" of *tapas*. This "heat" is produced by controlling or arresting the breath, which Mircea Eliade regards as an

1. J. Gonda, *Notes on Brahman*, Utrecht, J.L. Beyers, 1950, 40–58; see also J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion*, New Delhi, 1985, 198–202.
2. B. K.Smith, *Reflections on Resemblance, Ritual and Religion*, Oxford, 1989, 70–72.
3. J. Gonda, *Change and Continuity in Indian Religion*, 202–4.
4. *Atharvaveda*, 8, 2b: *skambha idam sarvam ātmanvad yat prāṇan nimiṣac ca yat* and *Atharvaveda*, 8, 6: *āviḥ sannihitaḥ guhā carann nāma mahat padam | tatredam sarvam arpitam ejat prāṇat pratiṣṭhitam*. The *ātman* is regarded in these texts as an animating, life-giving force: "everything that has an *ātman* breathes" (*Atharvaveda*, 11, 2, 10: *sarvam ātmavad prāṇat*). See Steven Collins, *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravāda Buddhism*, Cambridge, 1982, 50, 80–81.
5. *Atharvaveda*, 8, 15b: *mahad yakṣaṃ bhuvanasya madhye tasmai baliṃ rāṣṭabhṛto bharanti*.
6. L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, II, Paris, 1956, 28; "Sur la notion de brahman", *JA*, 237, 1949, 12–13.
7. *Atharvaveda*, X, 8, 43: *puṇḍarīkaṃ navadvāraṃ tribhir guṇebhir āvṛtam | tasmin yad yakṣam ātmanvat tad vai brahmavido viduḥ ||*.
8. L. Renou, *Études védiques et pāṇinéennes*, 72.
9. *ibid.*, 28.
10. *Atharvaveda*, X, 8, 11b: *tad dādhāra pṛthivīṃ viśvarūpaṃ tat sambhūya bhavaty ekam eva*.
11. *Artharvaveda*, X, 7, 38a: *mahad yakṣam bhuvanasya madhye tapasi krāntaṃ salilasya pṛṣṭhe*.
12. See W.O. Kälber, *Tapta Mārga: Asceticism and Initiation in Vedic India*, Delhi, 1990, 83–96.

assimilation of unorthodox yogic techniques to orthodox brāhmanic methods. The sacrifice itself becomes assimilated to *tapas*; in the practice of asceticism, he says, the gods are offered an "inner sacrifice" in which "physiological functions take the place of libations and ritual objects". This "interiorization" of Vedic sacrifice and ritual thus makes it possible for "even the most autonomous ascetics and mystics" to remain within the orthodox Vedic tradition.[13] Sacrifice and austerities are both indicated as effective ways of gaining knowledge about the great unborn *ātman* in the following passage from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*:

> "Brahmins desire to know it by recitation of the *Vedas*, by sacrifices, by charity, by austerities, and by fasting; after knowing it, one becomes a sage. Itinerant ascetics, desiring it alone as their world, wander forth."[14]

This passage first mentions brahmin priests gaining knowledge in the orthodox manner by reciting the *Vedas* and offering sacrifices but it goes on to mention a different kind of religious practitioner, the itinerant wander who has renounced the complex ritual world of the Vedic specialist to concentrate upon the *ātman* alone, an indication perhaps of the process of assimilating unorthodox traditions into the orthodox brahmanical fold.

According to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4, 4, 12–13), the individual who recognizes his own identity with the *ātman*, becomes, by virtue of this, the maker of all things; "he is, in fact, the world (*sa u loka eva*)". This liberating knowledge replaces the complex ritual practices through which the sacrificer constructed out of the sacrifice a divine self (*daiva ātman*) and a heavenly world for it to inhabit. Ritual action, according to the early Brahmanical texts, constructs both this self and its world.[15] Both the "divine self" and the "heavenly world" are particularized concepts in Vedic thought, Smith writes, "intimately linked with the particular sacrificer who fabricates them in his ritual activity". They are not, he emphasizes, "unitary concepts" but "rather, tailored to individuals and hierarchically gauged".[16] Though J.C. Heesterman has argued that in the *Upaniṣads*' interiorization of ritual, which makes services of ritual specialists superfluous, and the institution of renunciation are the "logical conclusion" that is already implied in the classical ritual texts,[17] Smith's suggestion that in the *Upaniṣads* one may be witnessing "the conclusion of Vedism, not in the sense of culmination but in the sense of its destruction", is more persuasive. He argues that the complex system of connections between phenomena that linked the human and the cosmic planes and the hierarchial distinctions maintained in Vedic ritualism are collapsed in the monistic thought of the *Upaniṣads* into "the ultimate connection: the equation of self and cosmos (without the ritual intermediary) formulated as the full equality of *ātman* and the *brahman*".[18]

In addition to the "interiorization of ritual", the early *Upaniṣads* describe other new techniques by which *ātman* and *brahman* can be known. Some of these passages seem to speak of a state of consciousness derived from the use of meditative techniques which shut down the mind's sensory processing of external data and bring about a state of inner tranquillity. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* appears to mention the practice of sensory withdrawal in its brief reference to the practice of "concentrating all the senses on the self"[19] as a means of preventing rebirth in this world. The cultivation of a tranquil, concentrated mental state, according to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, is essential to the ascetic's experience of seeing "self in the self".[20] The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* describes knowledge of the self as a fourth state beyond the usual states of waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep, a state which it characterizes as neither involving cognition of anything inside or outside or both, neither a (complex) mass of consciousness nor a (simple) consciousness, neither conscious nor unconscious.[21] This state is described twice in this text as the calming of *prapañca* (7 & 12). The term *prapañca* in this context appears to refer to a disruptive world of multiform appearance in contrast to the unified experience of self achieved in this fourth state of mind. Although the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣads* suggest the use of meditative techniques for calming the mind and the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad* characterizes the liberated state as the one in which calm and peace prevail over the sensory disturbances common to waking and dreaming states of mind, it is in the religious literature of the nonorthodox traditions, the Jains and the Buddhists, that we find more detailed descriptions of these techniques of sensory withdrawal. Both Jain and Buddhist literature redefine the nature of sacrifice and the qualities of a brahmin and explain differently the kind of liberating action required to cut one's ties to the world.

13. M. Eliade, tr. by W.R. Trask, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, Princeton, 1969, 108–112.
14. 4, 4, 22: *etaṃ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti yajñena dānena tapasā 'nāśakenaitam eva viditvā munir bhavati | etam eva prāvrajino lokam icchantaḥ pravrajanti.*
15. B.K. Smith, *op. cit.*, 102–3; S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 53–55.
16. B.K. Smith, *op. cit.*, 112–13.
17. J.C. Heesterman, "Brahmin, Ritual, and Renouncer", in *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship, and Society*, Chicago, 1985, 39–42.
18. B.K. Smith, *op. cit.*, 193–94.
19. *Chāndogya*, 8, 15: *ātmani sarvendriyāṇi sampraṣṭhapya[a]*. Cited and discussed by J. Bronkhorst, *Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Stuttgart, 1986, 108, 118.
20. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, 4, 4, 23: *dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvātmanyevātmānaṃ paśyati.*
21. *Māṇḍūkya*, 7: *nāntaḥ prajñaṃ na bahiṣprajñaḥ nobhayamayataṃ prajñaṃ na prajñānaghanaṃ na prajñaṃ nāprajñaḥ.*

The Jain *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* contains two stories[22] in which a Jain monk criticizes brahmins performing sacrifical actions. In chapter twelve of this text Harikeśa, a Jain monk born into a family of outcastes,[23] approaches brahmins performing a Vedic sacrifice. The text criticizes these brahmins as arrogant because of their high birth, as unchaste killers of animals, and as people who fail to restrain their senses. When asked about the right way of sacrificing, Harikeśa informs them that it involves not harming living beings, abstaining from lying and from taking what is not freely given, renouncing property, women, pride, deceit, and practising self-control. When they ask him about the oblation he offers into the fire, he responds that the practice of austerities (*tapas*) is his fire, and self-control, right exertion, and tranquillity are the oblations he offers. Chapter twenty-five tells the story of another Jain monk, Jayaghosa, who after a month's fast asks for alms from a brahmin who at first refuses his request. The Jain monk informs this brahmin that he does not know what is most important about performing a sacrifice nor does he realize the acts of a Vedic sacrifice—in which animals are tied to a pole and killed—will bring about the sacrificer's downfall. This monk defines a true brahmin as someone who does not injure living beings, take anything not given, or engage in sensual pleasures. A true brahmin, he says, renounces property and family and lives a chaste life. When the repentant brahmin offers Jayaghosa alms, he refuses to take them and instead requests that the brahmin immediately become a monk. The chapter concludes with the information that both men extinguished their *karma* through the practice of self-control and austerities. Jain texts include control over the senses' activity among the austerities which are intended to restrain all mental and physical activity. Both physical activity and mental activity create the conditions for *karma*, considered as a subtle form of matter, to flow into the soul and literally stain it. Ascetic practices purify the soul of this defiling stain of *karma* and, by liberating the soul from the passions of desire and hatred, prevent any further karmic influx (*āsava*). The *Sūyagaḍaṃgasutta* (I.7.27–30) states that a monk should control his desire for the pleasures of sense objects, remain detached even if beaten, and await death.[24] Another Jain text, the *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* (32, 21–34), also traces the conditions for the influx of *karma* back to the visual organ's perception of objects; attractive objects engender desire and unattractive objects, hatred. These emotional reactions, in turn, lead to the soul's accumulation of

22. H. Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras*, 2, New York, 1968, 50–56, 136–41.

23. The Sanskrit term is *śvapaca* "dog-cookers" or *śvapāka* "dog-mikers" about which David White, *Myths of the Dog-Man*, Chicago, 1991, 73, says: "[T]he two poles of Indian society, the wholly pure brahmins and the wholly impure *śvapacas* or *śvapākas*, are contrasted in terms of their diet: brahmins lived by the cooked milk of their pure cows, while outcastes lived by the flesh of their impure dogs."

24. H. Jacobi, *op. cit.*, 296–97.

karma. Only an ascetic indifferent to visible objects remains impervious to the pain that this influx of *karma* produces. To halt this painful developmental process, this text advises restraint of the senses:

> "By restraining the visual sense faculty, one brings about the restraint of attraction and aversion for pleasant and unpleasant visible forms; the action that results from this does not bind and action previously bound is destroyed."[25]

What is described as "pure meditation" (*śukladhyāna*) in Jain texts not only shuts down the mind's processing of sense data, but also shuts down all physical, verbal, and respiratory activites. Pure meditation, according to the *Sūyāgaḍaṃgasutta*, is of four kinds. In the first kind of meditation, the investigating mind focuses on multiple objects, in the second, the investigating mind is one-pointed, in the third, its activity becomes subtle and in the fourth it ceases. The *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* (29, 72) describes the third as occurring at the point when the meditator has less than a moment remaining of his life-span, when he stops all his activities and enters pure meditation in which only subtle activity remains, and from which, in the fourth kind, he does not fall back; he first stops the activity of his mind, then of his speech and body, and finally he puts a stop to breathing in and out. Bronkhorst observes that the four kinds of pure meditation can be looked upon as stages on the road to complete motionlessness and physical death. At the first stage, the mind still moves from one object to another. At the second stage, it stops doing so and comes to a standstill. The third and fourth stages are characterized by little or no physical activity. When the body and mind have been completely stilled, physical death takes place.[26] Along with this cessation of all activity, in the fourth stage of meditation comes the destruction of the meditator's *karma*. "After his *karma* is destroyed", the *Sūyagaḍaṃgasutta* (I, 7, 30) says, "he no longer engages in expanding his world".[27] In these early Jain canonical texts, one finds meditative techniques, including the technique of sensory withdrawal, subordinated to the main goal: a permanent halting of all activity through a planned and carefully monitored voluntary death.[28]

25. *Uttarādhyayanasūtra*, 29, 63: *cakkiṃdiyaniggaheṇaṃ maṇuṇṇamaṇuṇṇesu rūvesu rāgadosaniggahaṃ janayati, tappaccaiyaṃ kammaṃ na baṃdhai, puvvabaddhaṃ ca nijjarei*.

26. J. Bronkhorsi, *op. cit.*, 32–34.

27. *Sūyāgaḍaṃgasutta*, I, 7, 30: *niḍhūya kammaṃṃa pavaṃc'uvei*. This passage is cited and discussed in K.R. Norman, *Elders' Verses I*, London, 1969, 204.

28. On the practice of dying in meditation see P.S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, Berkeley, 1979, 227–40, and J. Bronkhorsi, *op. cit.*, 29–31, for a translation of a relevant passage from the *Āyāraṃga*.

The Buddhists share with the Jains a similar tradition of redefining the true nature of the sacrifice but accord meditation a more prominent role in a monk's religious practice. The *Kūṭadantasutta* (D, I, 140–49) has the Buddha describe in response to the brahmin Kūṭadanta's questions about the most profitable of sacrifices, a series of sacrifices beginning with sacrifices in which no animals are killed and no trees cut down for the sacrificial post, and culminating in the most profitable of all sacrifices: the life of a monk of exemplary moral conduct, who is accomplished in meditation and has acquired insight into the truth of the Buddha's teachings.

In the prose prologue to the *Pūraḷāsasutta* (Sn, III, 4), the brahmin Sundarikabhāradvāja, after performing a fire sacrifice, seeks a suitable recipient for the remains of his sacrifical offerings. The Buddha rejects the notion that birth and knowledge of the Sāvitrī *mantra* makes one a brahmin and informs Sundarikabhāradvāja that the sacrificial cake (*pūraḷāsa*) should be offered to those who have abandoned sensual pleasures, whose sense-faculties are well-restrained, and who wander in the world unattached:

> "The Tathāgata in whom there is no occasion for delusion, who perceives with insight all phenomena, who bears his last body and has reached complete awakening, unsurpassed peace—to such an extent is the purity of his being (*yakkha*)—deserves the sacrificial cake."[29]

The brahmin then offers him the sacrificial cake, which he refuses saying that he does not accept food consecrated by Vedic chants. The story concludes with the brahmin seeking admisssion to the order. As in the Jain story, the proper sacrificial offering is not food but the act of committing oneself to the life of a monk.

In this *sutta*, full of references to Vedic religion, it is possible that the term *yakkha* may be used in the sense that *yakṣa* was used in the *Artharvaveda* X, 8. One verse in the *Suttanipāta* (v.927) prohibits a monk from resorting to the type of magical practices contained in *Artharvaveda*; the composers of these verses may also have been familiar with the philosophical passages in the tenth book. The expression *yakkhassa suddhim* occurs again in the *Suttanipāta* in a somewhat different context.

The *Kahalavivādasutta* (Sn, 862–877) depicts a causal sequence which is more complex than those of the early Jain texts but which shares the same main elements: desire has its sources in pleasant sensations which, in turn, result from the visual organ's contact with a visible object. This early *sutta*, however, is less explicit about the meditative techniques that halt this development. One verse indicates that this developmental process ceases with the attainment of a meditative state in which visible form (*rūpa*) is no longer an object of cognition. The negative and seemingly paradoxical language, which the author of this verse uses to describe this meditative state, makes any definitive interpretation of this verse difficult. Still, some tentative conclusions can be reached on the basis of what the author excludes from consideration:

> "Visible form ceases for someone who has attained [a state in which there is] neither a consciousness characteristic of [normal] cognition nor of non[normal]-cognition; neither [is this state] unconscious nor has consciousness ceased to exist. Concepts characterized by development have cognition as their source."[30]

This verse's four negations deny the applicability of each of two sets of ascriptions: (1a) normal cognitive activity and (1b) abnormal cognitive activity and what I propose to interpret as (2a) a temporary cessation of cognitive activity and (2b) a permanent cessation of cognitive activity. These latter two negations exclude the possibility of this state's resemblance to the meditative trance state of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*), in which all conceptual and sensory activities temporarily cease,[31] or to any state that occurs after death. The commentarial literature also had difficulty in interpreting this verse. The canonical *Niddesa* commentary rejects any possibility of an allusion to the four formless meditative attainments (*arūpasamāpatti*) or to the meditative attainment of cessation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) and suggests, not altogether convincingly, that the verse alludes to a meditator on the path to the formless realms (*arūpamaggasamaṅgī*, Nd, I, 280), as does Buddhaghosa's commentary, the *Paramatthajotikā* (II, 553).

The commentarial literature's difficulties with this *sutta* extend also to interpretation of the expression *yakkhassa suddhim* in the two verses that follow:[32]

> "What we have asked, you have answered. We would like to ask you something else. Tell us: Do some learned people say that, here, such purity of being is the best or do they say that something else [is better] than this? Some learned people say that, here, such purity of being is the best. But some of them, who claim expertise in the 'remainderless', speak about extinction[33] as [the highest]."

29. *Suttanipāta*, 478: *mohantarā vassa na santi keci, sabbesu dhammesu ca ñāṇadassī, sarīrañ ca antimaṃ dhāreti, patto (ca) sambodhi anuttaraṃ sivaṃ—etāvatā yakkhassa suddhi—tathāgato arahati pūraḷāsaṃ.*

30. *Suttanipāta*, 874: *na saññāsaññī na visaññāsaññī no pi asaññī na vibhūtasaññī, evaṃsametassa vibhoti rūpaṃ, saññānidānā hi papañcasaṃkhā.*

31. P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless*, La Salle, 1986, 1–41, discusses at length the attainment of this state in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition.

32. *Suttanipāta*, 875: *yan tam apucchimha, akittayī no, aññaṃ taṃ pucchāma, tad iṃgha brūhi: ettāvat' aggaṃ no vadanti h'eke yakkhassa suddhiṃ idha paṇḍitāse, udāhu aññam pi vadanti ettho. Suttanipāta*, 876: *ettāvat' aggam pi vadanti h'eke yakkhassa suddhiṃ idha paṇḍitāse, tesaṃ pun'eke samayaṃ vadanti anupādisese kusalā vadānā.*

33. The *Niddesa* (I, 282) glosses the term *samaya* as calming (*sama, upasama, vūpasama*) and cessation (*nirodha*) and indicates that this takes place after death.

Although the term *yakkha* in the masculine gender ordinarily refers to a non-human being (*amanussa*), the *Niddesa* (I, 280) interprets the phrase *yakkhassa suddhim* as referring to the purity of a human being. In an obvious attempt to explain away the problematical occurrence of the word *yakkha* in this verse, the *Niddesa* commentator glosses this word with a list of stock synonymns for human being.[34] Ñāṇananda's translation of this expression as "purity of the soul" may be based upon the *Niddesa*'s inclusion of the word *jīva* in this list. He proceeds to argue that in these verses "the wise men" (used ironically, he adds), who "identify the aforementioned paradoxical state as the highest purity of the soul", represent the Upaniṣadic tradition.[35] While the Buddha and immediate disciples may have been aware of the teachings of the early *Upaniṣads*,[36] Ñāṇananda in translating *jīva* as "soul" disregards the fact that the *Niddesa* passage clearly uses the term *jīva* in the sense of living being. What then might *yakkhassa suddhim* mean in this context? Previous translations of the verse in which this problematic expression occurs have relied upon the *Niddesa*.[37] But in the case of this verse, the commentary may not be helpful. The context of these verses indicates the topic under discussion is the meditative technique of sensory withdrawal. This suggests that the expression might be better interpreted as referring to the purity of the senses. If the *y* of *yakkhassa* is taken as a *sandhi* consonant placed between the final vowel of the preceding word *eke* and the initial vowel of *akkhassa* for euphonic reasons, the phrase then becomes *akkhassa suddhim*, "the purity of the visual sense". This seems to be the way

The verse may refer to the Jain practice of meditation to death and suggests an alternative derivation from the root *śam* "to calm, to be extinguished" for the Jaina Prakrit term *samaya*, usually derived from the root *i* plus the preverb *sam* and translated by equanimity. Jaini, 221, notes that the derivation of the term from the root *i* "to go" is not clear.

34. *Niddesa*, I 280: *yakkhassa ti | sattassa narassa māṇavassa posassa puggalassa jīvassa jagussa jantussa indagussa manujassa | suddhim ti visuddhim.*

35. Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality*, Kandy, 1971, 123–25.

36. L.M. Joshi, *Discerning the Buddha*, New Delhi, 1983, 49–52, argues for dating the *Bṛhadāranyaka* and the *Chāndogya circa* 500 BC and the remaining nine early Upaniṣads circa 400–200 BC.; cf. Bronkhorst, *op. cit.*, 108–116. But K.R. Norman in "A note on Āṭa in the Alagaddūpama Sutta", *Studies in Indian Philosophy: A Memorial Volume in Honour of Pandit Sukhlalji Sanghvi*, Ahmedabad, 1981, 19–29, and in "Aspects of early Buddhism", *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, ed. by D. Seyfort Ruegg & L. Schmithausen, Leiden, 1990, 24, and R. Gombrich, "Recovering the Buddha's Message", *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, 13–20, have uncovered references in Buddhist *suttas* to teachings now preserved in the *Bṛhadāranyaka* and *Chāndogya* Upaniṣads.

37. cf. Nyanaponika, *Sutta-Nipāta*, Konstanz, 1955, 55: "des Menschen Reinheit"; L. Gómez, "Proto-Mādhyamika in the Pali Canon", *EW*, 26, 1976, 146: "cleansing of the spirit" and H. Saddhatissa, *The Sutta-Nipāta*, London, 1985, 103: "purification of the individual being". K.R. Norman, *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nipāta)*, London, 1984, 145: "the supreme purity of the individual".

some Chinese translators dealt with the problematic term *yakkha* or *yakṣa*.[38] One might then translate the two verses in this way:

> "What we have asked, you have answered. We would like to ask you something else. Tell us: Do some learned people say that, here, such purity of visual sense is the best or do they say that something else [is better] than this? Some learned people say that, here, such purity of the visual sense is the best. But some of them, who claim expertise in the 'remainderless', speak about extinction as [the highest]."

These two verses, interpreted in this way, suggest that the Buddha rejects as the goal of religious practice both a temporary restraint of the senses and a permanent "purified" state that occurs after an ascetic's death. His remarks about people who claim to be experts about a 'remainderless' state that occurs after death, about which they could not possibly have any direct experience, are clearly intended to be ironic. This *sutta* concludes that the sage who examines and understands these people's reliance on speculative views is released from such views, does not enter factional disputes, and seeks neither rebirth nor death (Sn, 877). Both verses may refer to Jain practitioners.

The Buddha further criticizes this practice of restraining the senses in the *Indriyabhāvanāsutta* (M, III, 298ff). Here, the student Uttara explains, at the Buddha's request, that his meditation instructor, Pārāsariya, teaches that when the senses are restrained, the visual sense organ does not perceive visible objects. The Buddha replies sarcastically that the blind have mastered that practice since

38. A.F. Rudolf Hoernle, *Manuscript Remains of Buddhist Literature Found in Eastern Turkestan*, 1, Oxford, 1916, 34, comments: "The presence of the epithet *yakkhassa* in verse 10b of the Pāli version is puzzling. Buddha could not with any propriety be called a Yaksha, particularly in a hymn in his praise. The Chinese translation which says "who has the highest eyes" supplies the solution. The Sanskrit original must have had the word *akṣasya*, eye". He concludes that: "The Pāli *yakkhassa*, therefore, is clearly *akkhassa* with an initial euphonic *y*, just as we have it in *na yimassa, yāci eva, kiñci yiṭṭhaṃ*, etc." cf. Bhikṣu Thich Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Āgama and the Pāli Majjhima Nikāya*, Saigon, 1964, 190–91. But E. Waldschmidt, *The Varṇāsatam: A Eulogy of One Hundred Epithets of Lord Buddha spoken by the Gṛhapati Upāli(n)*, Göttingen, 1979, 15, disagrees: "Today, a translator would not be shocked by epithets based on popular religious conceptions and assigned to the Buddha as a superhuman being." He concludes that the Chinese translator replaced such an epithet. He adds in a note page 14: "Hoernle's scruples do not pain Buddhaghosa who assigns qualities of a Yakṣa to the Buddha: *yakkhassā ti ānubhāvadassanaṭṭhena adissamānakaṭṭhena vā bhagavā yakkho nāma ten'āha yakkhassa*. Oskar von Hinüber, "Upāli's Verses in the Majjhimanikāya", in L.A. Hercus, ed., *Indological and Buddhist Studies*, Delhi, 1984, 249, suggests another possibility: the explanation of (*anuttara*) *cakṣus*: *yakṣaya* may originate from a confusion of the Kharoṣṭhī *akṣaras ya-* and *a-* and leading to *akṣasa* interpreted as 'eye'. It is also possible that *yakkha*, coupled here with the expression *āhuneyyassa* "worthy of the oblation", may refer to the term as used in *Atharvaveda*, X, 8.

their visual organs see no visible forms! The best cultivation of the senses (*anuttarā indriyabhāvanā*), he says, involves being mindful of the arising of pleasant sensations, etc., and understanding their constructed, dependently originated nature; this practice culminates in equanimity (*upekkha*). The practitioner remains unaffected by the pleasurable sensations that arise, just as a lotus leaf remains unaffected by drops of water. This meditative practice differs from that discussed in the Jain *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* (32:34, 106), primarily in that an intellectual analysis of the origination of pleasant sensations is incorporated into the meditative practice. Several verses in the *Theragāthā*, however, suggest that earlier Buddhist meditative practices did not include this intellectual analysis. In these verses (vv.726–34), Pārāsariya advocates restraining the senses as a means of preventing the pain that results from the desire that arises when one sees attractive objects.[39]

The purification of the senses according to another *Majjhima Nikāya sutta* (I, 296) occurs in the meditative trance state of cessation. In this state, they are inactive and thus "pure". Buddhaghosa explains, in his commentary on this *sutta* (II, 352), that the sense organs' contact with their objects "pollutes" them and diminishes their natural clarity.[40] In this instance also, the practice of restraining the senses involves a temporary cessation of cognitive activity. In the meditative state described in verse 874 of the *Kalahavivādasutta* no cognitive activity associated with visual objects exists, yet some conscious activity still persists. But what kind of conscious activity might this be? A passage from the *Udāna* (71), which links the non-cognition of visual objects (*arūpa-saññī*) with the elimination of discursive thoughts (*vitakka*), suggests the possibility that this meditative state may be one from which discursive thinking has been eliminated. This possibility receives some support from the explanation of cognitive activity in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* (M, I, 108–114), in which Kaccāna comments on the Buddha's brief remarks about avoiding disputes by not clinging to the source (*nidāna*) from which concepts and cognitions chara-cterized by development (*papañcasaññāsaṅkhā*) proceed. These brief remarks of the Buddha recall, in general, the subject matter of the *Kalahavivāda-sutta* and, in particular, its message that "concepts characterized by development have per-ception as their source" (*saññānidāna hi papañcasaṅkhā*). The *Majjhima Nikāya* passage (I, 111–112) reads:

> "Visual consciousness arises in dependence upon the eye and visible form; the conjunction of the three is contact. With contact as its condition, sensation [arises]. What one senses, one perceives; what one perceives, one reflects upon; what one reflects upon, one expands conceptually. What one expands conceptually is the basis from which ideas and perceptions [associated with] conceptual proliferation assail a human being, with regard to past, future, and present forms cognizable by the eye."[41]

A second explanation (M, I, 112), employing much the same terminology but a different format, directly follows the first. When the eye, visible form, and visual consciousness exist, it is said, one will recognize the manifestation of contact; when the manifestation of contact exists, one will recognize the manifestation of sensation; when the manifestation of sensation exists, one will recognize the manifestation of perception; when the manifestation of perception exists, one will recognize the manifestation of reflection; and finally, when the manifestation of reflection occurs, one will recognize the manifestation of ideas and perceptions [associated with] conceptual proliferation.

Kaccāna explains the source of these disruptive concepts and cognitions as a sequence, which begins with visual consciousness arising in dependence upon the visual sense and visible objects, followed by sensations arising from that contact, cognitions, discursive thinking, and ending finally with conceptual development. The distinction of subject and object takes place when the sense object contacts the mind (*manas*). After the mind becomes involved and proceeds to organize the sense data, various sensations and cognitions arise based upon the mental apprehension of that object's features. These explanations of cognition seem to suggest a sequence of causal conditions, each one, in some way, a necessary condition for the occurrence of the one that follows. Given the manner in which the second explanation is phrased, one might assume a temporal sequence: the manifestion of one condition arising prior to that of another. But this is not how Buddhaghosa interprets the passage in the *Majjhima Nikāya-Aṭṭhakathā* (I, 77). Visual consciousness arises, he says, in dependence upon the eye's sensitivity as the support (*nissaya*) and on visible form as the object (*ārammana*). Contact, sensation and perception arise at the same time as visual consciousness. Reflection arises immediately after visual consciousness. Conceptual proliferation (*papañca*) associated with the door of visual perception arises in dependence upon all the preceeding causal conditions: the eye, visible form, contact, sensation, perception, and reflection. It arises simultaneously with the cognitive stage of full cognition or impulsion (*javana*). Discursive thinking is

39. The *Theragāthā* gives his name as Pārāpariya but Norman, *Elders' Verses I*, 134, notes that the confusion *p/s* arose from the similarity of the two letters in the Brahmī script, and says, page 228, that the commentary identifies this monk with the meditation teacher mentioned in the *Indriyabhāvanāsutta*.

40. Griffiths, *op. cit.*, 7–12, translates and discusses Buddhaghosa's comments.

41. M, I, 111–112: *cakkuṃ cāvuso, ca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, yaṃ vedeti taṃ sañjānāti, yaṃ sañjānāti taṃ vitakketi, yaṃ vitakketi taṃ papañceti, yaṃ papañceti tato nidānaṃ purisaṃ papañcasaññāsaṅkhā samudācaranti atītanāgatapaccuppannesu cakkhuviññeyyesu rūpesu.*

the connecting link between this cognitive activity and the subsequent activity of conceptual development; and it is conceptual development that leads to the creation of new *karma*, new bonds to the cycle of birth and death.

Ñāṇananda identifies three stages in this first explanation of cognition. Analyzing its grammatical structure, he points out that the process is described impersonally until the arising of sensation. The third person endings of the verbs, beginning with "one senses" and ending with "one conceptually expands", he suggests, imply deliberate activity. The last stage, he says, seems "no longer a mere contingent process, nor is it an activity deliberately directed, but an inexhorable subjection to an objective order of things".[42] David Kalupahana, commenting on Ñāṇananda's thesis, notes that this impersonal pattern follows the general formula of causation: "when this exists, that exists or comes into existence (*imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti*)".[43] From the shift in tone from impersonal to personal, he concludes that immediately after sensation the process of perception becomes one between subject and object. This marks the intrusion of the ego-consciousness (*ahaṃkara*), which thereafter shapes the entire process of perception, culminating in the generation of conceptual proliferation (*papañca*).

Ñāṇananda's analysis reveals significant differences in the pattern of the *sutta's* formulation of stages in the cognitive process, though the fact that the grammatical structure of the passage abruptly changes from impersonal to personal may reflect the compiler's juxtaposing two similar passages on cognition rather than an original unified statement. But nevertheless, given the present passage, I would analyze it somewhat differently. The impersonal pattern prevalent in the first part of the initial description of cognitive activity, and in the second description, does resemble the familiar model associated with dependent origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). The content of the dependent origination formula and this passage on cognition overlaps: the activity of the senses leads to contact, which in turn, brings about sensation, upon which craving depends. Regardless of the grammatical structure of the passage, it is at the point of contact, the critical link between stage one and two, that there is the bifurcating distinction of object and subject. Contact is not the physical impact between object and consciousness but an indication of the sense datum's impact on the mind (*manas*). Once the mind becomes involved and proceeds to organize the data of the senses, the various sensations and perceptions arise. Though the activity is directed, and in that sense "deliberate", it does not yet produce new *kamma*. The link between stages two and three is reflection, which leads to conceptual proliferation, the basis for the ideas and perceptions that assail human beings.

42. Ñāṇananda, *Concept and Reality*, 5.
43. D. Kalupahana, *Causality*, Honolulu, 1975, 122.

It is possible to identify three temporal stages in this *sutta's* model of cognition. First, there is the contact of the eye, visible form and consciousness and the simultaneous arising of sensation and perception; second, the immediately following stage of reflection; and third, the final stage, the development of discursive ideas and concepts.

The question that verse 873 of the *Kalahavivādasutta* raises, which the Buddha answers in verse 874, and which is further explained by Kaccāna, is directly concerned with the means of getting rid of pleasure and pain, namely a meditative technique based upon curtailing the activity of the senses. Contact between sense organ and its object produces feelings based on that object's attractive or unattractive features. These feelings in turn lead to the emotional reactions of desire or aversion, which precede a person's taking some action with regard to that object. Conceptual development is then considered impure or polluted since it involves the negative emotional states of desire and aversion and is associated with the *karma* that binds one to the world. Through the restraint or purification of the senses and in particular of the visual sense (*akkhassa suddhiṃ*), *papañca*, the disruptive world perceived and developed as a result of the unrestrained activity of the senses ceases. It is this early technique of sensory withdrawal, common to meditators both within the orthodox Vedic tradition and the unorthodox traditions of Buddhism and Jainism, that the verses 874–76 of the *Kalahavivādasutta* discuss. In the final verse of this *sutta* (v.877), the Buddha concludes that it is the wise person who refuses to become involved in disputes about which religious practice is best, who succeeds in breaking free of the cycle of birth and death. The calming (*vyūpasama*) of discursive thought and the "one-pointed" focus of mind occurs in the second of four meditative states (*jhāna*). In the first of these states, the mind has withdrawn from sense objects. Gradually, the affective content of these mental states is toned down until pure equanimity is achieved in the fourth state. The *Khaggavisāṇasutta*, of the *Suttanipāta* (v.67), identifies the practice of these meditative states as the means for relinquishing pleasure and pain.

The closeness of this relation between a meditative technique that shuts down sensory processing and the calming of conceptual development is emphasized in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (II, 161–2). Here, Sāriputta explains that the range (*gati*) of conceptual development and that of sensory bases (*ayatana*) encompasses one another. The calming of conceptual development results from the detached cessation of the sensory bases of contact. He further explains that a person who speculates on whether something remains (does not remain, both, and neither) once the sensory bases completely cease, develops concepts about something that is beyond conceptual development. In other words, the kind of discursive thinking characterized by these four logical alternatives creates the mental unrest diametrically opposed to liberation. The *Theragāthā* (vv.989–90) records

Śāriputta as saying that by rejecting conceptual development, one attains *nibbāna*, rest from exertion.[44] Similarly, the Buddha, when asked on how to realize *nibbāna*, responded that one must cut off the root of what is called conceptual proliferation, namely the thought "I am" and by remaining mindful, control whatever internal desires he has (Sn, 916). In this way, one achieves the goal of inner calm (Sn, 919).[45]

Similar notions about conceptual development and the goal of inner calm recur centuries later in the work of the Mādhyamika philosopher, Nāgārjuna. In the twenty second chapter of his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, he also denies that assertions couched in terms of these four alternatives apply to the Buddha. Moreover, people disturbed by the formation and development of these concepts cannot see the Buddha:

> "Those who develop concepts about the Buddha, who is unchanging [and] beyond conceptual development, are all afflicted by conceptual development [and] do not see the Buddha."[46]

Nāgārjuna equates the calming of conceptual development with the peace of *nirvāṇa*: "tranquillity [is] the calming of all that is perceived, the calming of conceptual development".[47] This verse suggests that for Nāgārjuna also, meditative practices that withdraw the mind from all sensory stimuli are the means for calming the mind and controlling its tendency to develop concepts.

Influenced by Nāgārjuna's writings and those of other Buddhist authors is the early Advaita text, the *Gauḍapādiyakārikā*. The first chapter of this text comments on some statements in the *Māṇḍukya Upaniṣad*. According to the *Gauḍapā liyakārikā* (I, 17), conceptual development operates on the premise that duality between the percipient subject and the external objects of his perception is real; when the ultimate truth of non-duality is understood, this illusion ceases. The last verse (I, 29) of this chapter states that only the person who knows the soundless 'oṃ', identified with the calming of duality (*dvaitasyopaśama*) is a sage.

In the second chapter, the *Gauḍapādiyakārikā* (II, 16) notes that it is the individual self (*jīva*), functioning as the percipient subject, which constructs objects, both external and internal. This text also associates the elimination of disruptive emotions and discursive thought with the calming of conceptual development:

> "Sages detached from desire, anger, and fear, reach the *Vedas*' other shore and experience this calming of conceptual development, which is free of discursive thinking."[48]

The verse that follows recommends that one focus the mind's attention on non-duality and, after realizing non-duality, react to the world as if one were senseless (*jaḍa*). This advice recalls the Jain tradition of meditation in which body and mind become immobilized.

This brief survey of Indian literature on the meditative practice of restraining the senses shows that it is a technique common to different religious traditions. The term *prapañca*/*papañca* used in these texts often refers to the world constructed on the basis of one's sense impressions of phenomena and continually expanded through the mind's reactions to these impressions. By stopping the flow of sense impressions, the mind becomes tranquil and all conceptual development ceases. Despite the common language used in these texts to describe their religious experiences, it is by no means certain that the experience described is itself similar.

44. On *yogakhema* as "rest from exertion", see K.R. Norman, *Elders' Verses I*, 128, n. 32.

45. On these verses, see Gómez, *op. cit.*, 147, T. Vetter, "Some Remarks on Older Parts of the Suttanipāta", *Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka*, ed. by D. Seyfort Ruegg & L. Schmithausen, Leiden, 1990, 45; Ñāṇananda, *op. cit.*, 31.

46. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XX, 15: *prapañcayanti ye buddhaṃ prapañcātitam avyayam | te prapañcahatāḥ sarve na paśyanti tathāgatam.*

47. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, XXV, 24ab: *sarvopalambhopaśamaṃ prapañcopśamaṃ śivaṃ.*

48. *Gauḍapādiyakārikā*, II, 35: *vitarāgabhayakrodhair munibhir vedapāragaiṃ | nirvikalpo hy ayaṃ dṛṣṭaṃ prapañcopaśamo 'dvayaṃ.*

58/3

INTRODUCTION

In bibliographic terms, the emergence of texts on law appears to have been the result of highly regionalized developments. In what sense are they all Buddhist?

But if the Southeast Asian case raises questions about the influence of the example of the Buddhist canon in an area without pre-existing indigenous written traditions, the papers on East Asia demonstrate clearly some of the ramifications of the introduction of Buddhist texts into a world already furnished with a highly distinctive literary culture of long standing. Professor Barrett's first contribution shows that the translation of ever-increasing amounts of Buddhist literature was even felt from the Chinese point of view to exacerbate their own problems of understanding, and how it was only by postulating a non-literary form of tradition that the Chinese were able to ameliorate their situation. His second paper suggests that Chinese Buddhists were sometimes so much at the mercy of an indigenous conception of the function of literature as a legacy of the past that it affected their descriptions of even purely Buddhist experiences, further underlining the importance of the wider Chinese cultural context to an appreciation of Chinese Buddhist sources.

Dr. Astley's paper presents us with a portion of an important text of East Asian Buddhism, as it is interpreted in Japan today. His intimate knowledge of the living tradition of Japanese Buddhist scholarship allows us to judge how the text he studied is read there today, and how this differs from the type of approach current amongst Western scholars. We should remember that most important Buddhist scriptures circulating in East Asia were, and still remain, the focus of vigorous and elaborate traditions of interpretation scarcely touched by Western translators.

In short, then, although none of the participants in the Buddhist Forum was asked to address a common theme, or even to produce material designed for publication, this collection does provide a broad cross-section of British scholarship in Buddhist Studies today and, in particular, shows that Buddhism is not for us simply a textual object. Many of us work with textual materials, it is true, but we are in our different ways alive to the problems involved in this approach. Indeed, anyone wishing to explore the interaction of text and tradition in Buddhism will find much to stimulate their thinking in the collection of papers gathered here.

Finally, words of acknowledgment and gratitude are due to the School of Oriental and African Studies for accepting responsibility for the cost and distribution of the present publication; in particular to the Publication Committee for accepting the papers for publications, and to Mr. M. Daly and Miss D. Matias for their professional help in administrative and editorial matters.

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RECOVERING THE BUDDHA'S MESSAGE

R.F. Gombrich

When Professor Schmithausen was so kind as to invite me to participate in his panel[1] on "the earliest Buddhism" and I accepted, I had to prepare a paper for discussion without being clear what my fellow-participants would assume that "earliest Buddhism" to be. In the nineteenth century, not all European scholars were even prepared to accept that such a historical person as Gotama the Buddha had ever existed; and though such an extremity of scepticism now seems absurd, many scholars since have been prepared to argue either that we no longer have the Buddha's authentic teachings or that we have only a very few, the rest of the purported teachings being garbled or distorted by the later tradition. Since I believe that in order to make sense to an audience one needs to begin from its assumptions - the crucial point in part two of my paper below - this uncertainty was a handicap. On reading the papers of my colleagues, I realized that, like me, they all (except Professor Aramaki?) assumed that the main body of soteriological teaching found in the Pāli Canon does go back to the Buddha himself. The main thrust of recent work by Professors Schmithausen, Vetter and Bronkhorst in this area, as I understand it, has been to argue that there are inconsistencies in the earliest textual material, and that from these inconsistencies we can deduce a chronological development in the teachings, but that this development may well have taken place within the Buddha's own lifetime and preaching career. On the other hand, the fact that the fundamental Buddhist teachings can be ascribed to the Buddha himself was more assumed than argued for by my colleagues, whereas I made some attempt to reconstruct how the scriptural texts came into being. It seems to me that if my reconstruction is anything like correct, it raises problems for the method of arguing from alleged inconsistencies and makes it unlikely that we can in fact ever discover what the Buddha preached first and what later. Accordingly, when I spoke on the panel I made little use of my prepared script and preferred to use my time to address the latter issues. It is obvious that the positions taken by some of us are incompatible; one can either politely ignore the fact (and leave the audience to make up its own mind) or try to address the issues and hope to progress by argument. Though the latter course is unusual in such intellectual backwaters as Indology and Buddhist studies, I ventured to take it at the conference. By the same token, I have for publication revised the first part of my paper along the lines on

1. At the 7th World Sanskrit Conference, held in Leiden, August 1987. The editor of the present publication wishes to express his gratitude to E.J. Brill for permission to reproduce here Professor Gombrich's paper, originally submitted for publication in a volume edited by Professor Lambert Schmithausen and entitled *Studies in Earliest Buddhism and Madhyamaka* (forthcoming).

which I spoke while omitting criticisms of specific points. The second part of the paper is very little altered from the conference version.

I. We agree, then, that "the earliest Buddhism" is that of the Buddha himself. Unless a certain individual had propounded a doctrine that many found intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying, and unless he had deliberately organized his following, there would now be no *Dhamma* and no *Saṅgha*. There could have been a *Dhamma* without a *Saṅgha*, but in that case Buddhism would have had no history.

The function of the *Saṅgha* as an institution was twofold: to provide an institutional framework in which men and women could devote themselves to the quest for salvation (*nirvāṇa*), and to preserve the Buddha's teaching. In an age without books, the latter function can have been no minor matter. World history can, I believe, offer hardly any parallels to the creation and preservation of so large a body of texts as the Buddhist Canon. I have argued elsewhere[2] that that Buddhists may have realized that it was possible because of the example before them of the brahmin preservation of Vedic literature, achieved by dint of a system of extraordinarily long and tedious compulsory education for brahmin boys.

None of the other religious leaders contemporary with the Buddha seem to have achieved such preservation of their teachings, and this may well reflect the fact that they did not organize settled religious communities like the Buddhist monasteries. I believe the Digambara Jaina tradition that their own canon was wholly lost, for I cannot see why such a story should arise if it were not true, whereas the temptation to claim the highest antiquity and authority for one's scriptures is obvious. In any case, all Jains agree that many of their canonical texts were lost at an early stage. The Buddhists were aware of the contrast between themselves and the Jains. The *Saṅgīti-suttanta*[3] begins by recounting that at the death of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta his followers disagreed about what he had said. The same passage occurs at two other points in the Pāli Canon; but it makes good sense in this context, for it is the occasion for rehearsing a long summary of the Buddha's teaching in the form of mnemonic lists. The text says that the rehearsal was led by Sāriputta, in the Buddha's lifetime. Whether the text records a historical incident we shall probably never know. But that is not my point. I would argue that unless we posit that such episodes took place not merely after the Buddha's death but as soon as the *Saṅgha* had reached a size and geographic spread which precluded frequent meetings with the Buddha, it is not possible to conceive how the teachings were preserved or texts were composed. By similar reasoning, something like the first *saṅgāyanā* (communal recitation) must have taken place, otherwise there would simply be no corpus of scriptures. Details such as the precise time and place of the event are irrelevant to this consideration.

The Buddhists had to emulate the brahmins by preserving a large body of texts, but since membership of the Saṅgha was not ascribed at birth but achieved much later, usually in adulthood, they could not imitate the years of compulsory

2. "How the Mahāyāna began", *Journal of Pāli and Buddhist Studies* I, Nagoya, March 1988, 29-46. This article is included in the present publication as part of Professor Gombrich's seminar presentation.

3. *Dīgha-nikāya, sutta* XXXIII.

education. To preserve orally the basic Buddhist texts, by which I mean something like the *Vinaya* minus the *Parivāra*, the four *Nikāyas* of prose sermons and the poetry of the *Khuddaka-nikāya* - must have required a vast amount of sustained and highly organized effort. Though there is evidence that extraordinary feats of memory are possible for individuals, whether or not they live in pre-literate civilizations,[4] these Buddhist texts amount to hundreds of thousands of lines, so much that only a very few individuals of exceptional mnemonic gifts can ever have mastered the lot. We know that in Ceylon monks (and presumably nuns) specialized in a specific collection of texts, and the logic of the situation suggests that this must have been so from the outset.

This must have implications for textual criticism. Segments of texts (sometimes called pericopes) are preserved in different contexts, but it may not be possible to deduce from this that one passage is earlier than another, let alone which comes first. For instance, most of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* occurs elsewhere in the Pāli Canon, but that only shows that what the memorizers of the *Dīgha-nikāya* kept as a single text was preserved piecemeal by other groups. This is by no means to deny that one can occasionally show that a piece of text must have started in one context from which it was then transferred to another; but each such piece of evidence has to be teased out separately, and such demonstrations are still very few.[5]

No one was in a position to record or reproduce the Buddha's sermons as he uttered them. The texts preserved did not just drop from his lips; they must be products of deliberate composition - in fact, they were composed to be memorized. This inevitably introduces a certain formalization: such features as versification, numbered lists, repetition and stock formulae are all aids to memory. Vedic literature includes texts which display all these features. Early brahminical literature also includes prose texts, the *sūtras*, which were orally preserved and followed a different strategy: instead of redundancy, they aim for extreme brevity. There are however no early Buddhist texts in the *sūtra* style. A *sūtra* is so composed that it cannot be understood without exegesis. The Buddhist texts, by contrast, apparently aim to be self-explanatory.

4. See Ulric Neisser, ed., *Memory Observed: Remembering in Natural Contexts*, San Francisco, 1982, especially parts V and VII. On the topic "Literacy and Memory" Neisser writes, page 241: "Illiteracy cannot improve memory any more than my lack of wings improves my speed afoot. And while it would be logically possible to argue that literacy and schooling make memory worse, the fact of the matter is that they don't. On the contrary: cross-cultural studies have generally found a positive relation between schooling and memory." On the other hand, he goes on, "particular abilities can be nourished by particular cultural institutions". Bards performing oral poetry are one such institution; the Saṅgha memorizing Buddhist texts could well be another.

5. Some notable efforts in this direction were made by Jean Przyluski in his huge four-part article "Le Parinirvāṇa et les funerailles du Buddha". Many of his arguments now seem far-fetched and some of his statements have even been shown to be factually inaccurate; but I remain impressed by his analysis of the third chapter *(bhāṇavāra)* of the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* in the second part of the article, *JA*, XIème série, XII, 1918, 401-56. For a case study on a far more modest scale, see my "Three souls, one or none: the vagaries of a Pāli pericope", *JPTS*, XI, 1987, 73-8.

Since there were religious texts being preserved in the Buddha's environment in both prose and verse, there seems to be no *a priori* ground for holding that Buddhist prose must be older than Buddhist verse or vice versa.[6] The ability to speak in verse *extempore* is not common and there is no reason to suppose that the Buddha had it; moreover, extended discourse in *extempore* verse in ancient India was generally in a rather free metre like the *anuṣṭubh*, not in the kind of lyric metres found in the *Suttanipāta*.[1] A text which purports to reproduce an actual sermon by the Buddha is therefore likely to be in prose, and this implies no particular lapse of time after the event. As we know, many texts do purport to reproduce the Buddha's sermons. If in doing so they employ various of the conventions of oral literature, schematizing the material by the use of formulae and stock passages, this is no argument against their essential authenticity.

I turn now to consider the style of argument that attempts to discern chronological layers in the texts by finding inconsistencies in them. Before criticizing this approach, I must make it clear that I am in no way committed to assuming *a priori* that the early texts do all date from the Buddha's lifetime or to denying that stratification is possible. My wish is merely to expose what I see as faulty argumentation. I also think it sound method to accept tradition until we are shown sufficient reason to reject it.

The method of analysing Buddhist arguments with a view to establishing their coherence and development is I think largely inherited from the late Professor Frauwallner. I have the greatest admiration for his work and think that it has yielded many valid and interesting results. However, we must remember that most of that work was applied to philosophical texts which were undoubtedly written and read. I must begin my criticism by reiterating in the strongest terms that the kind of analysis which can dissect a *written* philosophical tradition is inappropriate for oral materials. As I have shown, the texts preserving "the Buddha's word" are not authored in the same sense as a written text. While it is perfectly possible that some of the texts (perhaps some poetry?) were composed by the Buddha himself, we cannot know this with any certainty, and almost all the texts are, strictly speaking, anonymous compositions. The one important exception to this may be the *Thera-* and *Therī-gāthās*, which may be by the individual monks and nuns whom tradition holds to have been the authors.

There is however a principle that we may learn from the critical study of written texts, for its validity does not depend on the medium. This is the principle known as *difficilior potior*, that it is the more difficult reading which is to be preferred. Colleagues have written on the assumption that the Buddha, since he was a great thinker, must have been consistent, so that inconsistencies must have been introduced later by the less intelligent men who followed him. But that is the reverse of how we should normally look at it. A tradition, whether scribal or oral, always tends to *iron out* inconsistencies; when in any doubt, it goes for the obvious. It is this tendency to which *difficilior potior* refers. If our texts preserve something awkward, it is most unlikely to have been introduced by later generations of Buddhists who had been taught to accept the generally neat and uniform doctrine expounded in the commentaries.

The Buddha preached for many years - tradition says, for forty five. Teachers, unless they are exceptionally stupid, change both their opinions and their way of putting things. That the Buddha varied his way of putting things according to what audience he was addressing is indeed a commonplace of the Buddhist tradition, which attributes to him supreme "skill in means"; but that tradition would baulk at the idea that he ever changed his mind. However, I am not committed to the tradition; nor do the two kinds of change, in meaning and expression, necessarily show results which the observer can distinguish. It is mainly writing that freezes our past insights for us and so gives our *oeuvre* a certain consistency; even so, I suspect that there can be few university teachers today who have not had the experience of re-reading something they had written long ago and finding it unfamiliar. (Which is more depressing: to find that what we once wrote now seems all wrong, or to find that it contains facts we have forgotten and bright ideas we can no longer remember having thought of?) Thus, as hard-headed historians we cannot think that over 45 years the Buddha could have been entirely consistent - and especially when we take into account that he could not read over or play back what he had said. If the texts have any valid claim to be the record of so long a preaching career, they cannot be wholly consistent. Indeed, the boot is on the other foot: the texts are too consistent to be a wholly credible record. It is obvious that literary convention and human forgetfulness have contributed to the tendency recalled in my previous paragraph so as to iron out many of the inconsistencies of both message and expression which must have occurred.

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, let me add that naturally I am not suggesting that the Buddha's teaching was incoherent. Had that been so, there would have been few converts and no enduring tradition. There is considerable agreement in the canonical texts themselves and the commentaries on those texts about the central features of the Buddha's message; and Mr Norman seems to me to give an excellent account of them in his paper for this volume.[7]

Despite this, some of my learned colleagues have called the texts as witnesses into the dock, and declared after cross-examination that their testimony leaves much to be desired. Do the texts claim that there are Four Noble Truths? But our logic tells us that the third is a corollary of the second, so there should only be Three. Worse, it is alleged that the very accounts of the Buddha's enlightenment are inconsistent. For example, he or his followers could apparently not make up their minds whether the crucial step is to get rid of all moral defilements or to know that one has done so. Many similar failings are alleged, each scholar selecting

6. Similarly, while versifiers differ in their ability, I can see no *a priori* ground for supposing that a poem which is metrically strict must be older or younger than one which employs metrical licence. Naturally this is not to deny that some metres were invented earlier than others.

7. Professor Gombrich is referring here to Mr Norman's paper included in the volume edited by Professor Schmithausen.

his own and accordingly devising a different line of development for early Buddhism.

But what are we discussing here? The description of religious experience is notoriously difficult. There is good reason for this difficulty. Since language is an instrument of social communication, all private experiences tend to elude linguistic expression, as we know from our visits to the doctor. For linguistic communication, we depend on shared experience: the doctor will with luck be able to deduce from our account of where and how it hurts what is wrong with us, because of similar previous attempts at description which he has read or encountered in his practice. But if our pain is unique in his experience, we are unlikely to be able to make him understand. To describe our emotions or aesthetic feelings we resort to the conventions offered by our culture but generally feel dissatisfied by their inadequacy: common words cannot convey our singularity.

Following an overwhelming experience, the Buddha tried to describe it, in order to recommend it to others. He felt that it was new, at least in his time, so that he had no past descriptions to help him out; indeed, tradition records that he was reluctant to preach because he doubted whether anyone would accept his account.[8] Surely one would expect a highly intelligent and articulate person not to be content with one kind of description of his experience but to approach it from many angles and points of view. In particular, since his experience was felt to be an awareness, he would be bound to speak of it both in subjective, experiential terms, and in more objective terms to convey the truth realized. (In general Sanskrit terminology, I am referring to *yoga*, the experience, and *jñāna*, the knowledge.) Followers, no doubt including some who had not had such an experience, standardized and classified the accounts of it. But they did preserve two kinds of account, experiential and gnostic, and since the Buddha evidently had a *gnostic experience* I find it odd to argue that one kind of account must be earlier or more authentic than the other.

The dual nature of gnostic experience is less intractable than the sheer impossibility of describing the kinds of states of mind nowadays generally called "altered states of consciousness". The typical reaction to having such an experience has been to say that it is beyond words and to describe it, if at all, in highly figurative language. Nevertheless, in societies in which altered states of consciousness are regularly sought and/or attained, standardized descriptions of the experience are naturally current, and people develop expectations that certain practices will lead to specific experiences. Fieldwork in Sri Lanka has convinced me that even in such a society the labelling of altered states of consciousness performs a social function but may completely falsify the experiences. Sinhala Buddhist culture defines possession, loss of normal awareness and self-control, as the polar opposite of the states achieved by the Buddhist meditator; and yet I have recorded[9] several cases in which it seems clear from circumstantial evidence that a person is experiencing a state of consciousness which is defined in completely

8. *Vinaya*, I, 5.
9. R. Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed*, Princeton, 1988.

61/3

different terms (for instance, as possession or *jhāna*) according to the institutional context and hence the cultural expectations. If the same state can be given contrasting labels, it is plausible that the same label may also be applied to very different states.

I am not claiming that the Buddha was so muddled that he could not distinguish between losing and enhancing normal awareness. But I am claiming that descriptions of meditative or spiritual experiences cannot profitably be submitted to the same kind of scrutiny as philosophical texts.

I would, however, go even further. Coherence in these matters is largely in the eye of the beholder. Few texts - taking that term in the widest sense - are up to the standards of the western lawyer or academic in their logical coherence or clarity of denotation, and by those standards most of the world's literary and religious classics are to be found wanting. The first verse of St. John's gospel informs us (in the King James version) that "the Word was with God, and the Word was God". Does this stand up to our examination? Must St. John go to the back of the class?

Surely what we do with such a passage is not to decide that it is incoherent but try to learn what coherence the Christian tradition has found in it. Yet some of my colleagues are finding inconsistencies in the canonical texts which they assert to be such without telling us how the Buddhist tradition itself regards the texts as consistent - as if that were not important. My own view is not, I repeat, that we have to accept the Buddhist tradition uncritically, but that if it interprets texts as coherent, that interpretation deserves the most serious consideration.

modern commentators

The above critical remarks do not mean that I think we can do no more than rehearse the Buddhist tradition. We have historical knowledge and awareness denied to the commentators, and can use them to throw light on the earliest texts. In the second half of my paper I hope to make a positive contribution by illustrating this point.

culturally embedded meaning

II. Meaning is embedded in a cultural context and any message, however new, must be couched in terms the audience can understand. The speaker cannot communicate with his audience unless he shares not merely their language, in the literal sense, but most of the presuppositions reflected in their use of that language - though of course he need accept the presuppositions only provisionally. The new acquires its meaning by standing in contrast to the old; fully to understand a speaker, we need to know what he is denying. We shall never know all the assumptions in the minds of the audiences to whom the Buddha preached, but we can know a good deal, and I find that not enough use has yet been made of that knowledge.

The Buddha's message is to be understood in opposition to the other articulated ideologies of his day. The most important of these was the brahminical. Jains maintain that Mahāvira, the Buddha's contemporary, was no great innovator but carrying on an older tradition. That may be so, but of that older tradition we have

no certain knowledge. Neither the other contemporary teachers mentioned in the Pāli texts nor, I believe, Mahāvīra, left any surviving record of their teachings, so we depend on what the Buddhist texts have to say about them. Even this, however, is quite helpful: the Buddha's view of moral causation was clearly meant to contrast with that of the other views described in the *Sāmaññaphala-sutta*[10] (whether those descriptions are historically accurate or not); and in the *Vinaya* the Buddha several times[11] defined what he meant by his middle way in contrast to the extreme asceticism of other sects. But clearly it is more illuminating to have independent evidence and then be able to see what the Buddha made of it.

Before trying to apply this principle, I must offer an observation which is certainly subjective and yet seems to me important. Again and again we find that the Buddha's references to brahmins and brahminism are humorous and satirical. Are jokes ever composed by committees? The guru is venerated in India. His words are treasured. That is not to say that later words which seem worth treasuring may not be attributed to the guru - certainly they may. But does one attribute to the guru a wide range of humorous observations, even remarks which border on flippancy? When the Buddha is recorded to have said[12] that brahmins claim to be born from the mouth of Brahmā, but don't their mothers menstruate and give birth? - then I wonder whether any monk would have dared to attribute such a remark to him unless he had actually said it.

* * * * * * *

According to the Canon, many of the Buddha's sermons were addressed to brahmins. Moreover, of those monks whose caste origins were recorded by the tradition (mainly the commentary to the *Theragāthā*), about 40% were brahmins.[13] The original Saṅgha did not contain a typical cross-section of the population. What religious institution does? In the early Saṅgha the high-caste, the wealthy and the educated - three overlapping groups then as still (in India) - were heavily over-represented. It is hardly surprising that the Buddha should have tended to speak to the educated class. They were the professional educators - as to a large extent they have been ever since.

The word *veda* has been used to refer to certain texts, but its original meaning is simply "knowledge". Another term for the *Veda*, those texts which constituted *the* knowledge which really counted, is *brahman*. A *"brahman* person" is a *brāhmaṇa*. The *Veda* had appeared among men through the mouths of such people, and in the Buddha's day (and long after) access to it still only lay in the same quarter. The *Veda*, embodying true knowledge, was the source of all authority; but what the *Veda* said - and indeed what it meant - one could learn only from brahmins. To deny the authority of the *Veda*, therefore, was to deny the authority of brahmins, and vice versa. This is precisely what the Buddha did.

10. *Dīgha-nikāya*, I, 52-59.
11. e.g., *Vinaya*, I, 305; III, 212.
12. *Majjhima-nikāya*, II, 148 = *Dīgha-nikāya*, III, 81-82.
13. B.G. Gokhale, "Early Buddhism and the Brahmins", in A.K. Narain, ed., *Studies in the History of Buddhism*, Delhi, 68-80.

The fact that the Buddha gave new values to terms like *brāhmaṇa* is of course very well known. For him the true brahmin is the man who displays not the traditional, largely ascribed characteristics of the brahmin, such as pure birth, but the achieved qualities of the good Buddhist, ethical and psychological traits.[14] The brahmin by caste alone, the teacher of the *Veda*, is (jokingly) etymologized as the "non-meditator" *(ajjhāyaka)*.[15] Brahmins who have memorized the three *Vedas (tevijja)* really know nothing:[16] it is the process of achieving Enlightenment - what the Buddha is said to have achieved in the three watches of that night - which constitutes the true "three knowledges".[17]

Some of the great modern scholars of Buddhism have said that the Buddha had no direct knowledge of Vedic texts,[18] but that is certainly wrong. The joke about how brahmins are born satirizes the *Puruṣasūkta*, the text in which brahmins are said to originate from the mouth of the cosmic Man.[19] There are similarly satirical allusions to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. One example is the anecdote about Brahmā's delusion that he created other beings. It occurs in the *Brahmajāla-sutta*[20] of the *Dīgha-nikāya* to explain why some people think that the world and the soul are partly eternal and partly not; but, as Rhys Davids points out in the footnote to his translation,[21] it also occurs in the *Majjhima-* and *Saṃyutta-nikāyas* and in the *Jātaka* - just what one would expect if my view of the preservation of the *Buddha-vacana* is anywhere near the truth. Brahmā is reborn (in Rhys Davids' words) "either because his span of years has passed or his merit is exhausted"; he then gets lonely and upset and longs for company. Then, "either because their span of years had passed or their merit was exhausted", other beings are reborn alongside him. *Post hoc, propter hoc*, thinks silly old Brahmā, and gets the idea that the other beings are his creation. I suppose that many who have read and even taught this passage (since it is in Warder's *Introduction to Pali*)[22] have noticed that this is just a satirical retelling of the creation myth in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*,[23] in which Brahmā is lonely and afraid and so begets for company; but I am not aware that anyone has pointed it out in print.

However, it was not just to joke on peripheral topics that the Buddha referred to brahmin doctrines, notably as expressed in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. For many years I have tried to show in my teaching and lecturing that the Buddha presented central parts of his message, concerning *kamma* and the *tilakkhaṇa*,[24] as a set of

14. *Suttanipāta*, verse 142 (= *Vasala-sutta*, verse 27).
15. *Dīgha-nikāya*, III, 94.
16. *Tevijja-sutta*, *Dīgha-nikāya*, *sutta* XIII.
17. *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, I, 163.
18. e.g., L. de la Vallée Poussin, *La morale bouddhique*, Paris, 1927, 12.
19. *Ṛgveda*, X, 90, 12.
20. *Dīgha-nikāya*, I, 17-18.
21. T.W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part I, SBB, London, 1899, 31.
22. A.K. Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, London, 1963, 198-199.
23. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1, 4, 1-3.
24. The three hallmarks of phenomenal existence (i.e. of life in this world as we unenlightened beings experience it): impermanence, suffering, non-self.

63/3

allusions to brahminical doctrine.[25] I shall need much more time to read and think about the texts before I can hope to expound this interpretation at full length, but in this paper I can at least indicate with a couple of illustrations the general argument.

I am by no means the first to have pointed out the importance of the *Alagaddūpama-sutta*.[26] It was Mr.Norman, my teacher and fellow-contributor to the panel, who first demonstrated[27] that it contains a deliberate refutation of Yājñavalkya's teaching in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. Since experience has shown me that this demonstration is still not widely known, I shall take the liberty of summarizing the argument in my own words.

The *sutta* has two relevant passages, which I translate[28] as follows:

A. "There are six wrong views: An unwise, untrained person may think of the body, 'This is mine, this is me, this is my self'; he may think that of feelings; of perceptions; of volitions; or of what has been seen, heard, thought, cognized, reached, sought or considered by the mind. The sixth is to identify the world and self, to believe: 'At death I shall become permanent, eternal, unchanging, and so remain forever the same; and that is mine, that is me, that is my self.' A wise and well-trained person sees that all these positions are wrong, and so he is not worried about something that does not exist."[29]

B. "So give up what is not yours, and you will find that that makes you happy. What is not yours? The body, feelings, perceptions, volitions and consciousness. What do you think of this, monks? If someone were to gather the grass, sticks, branches and foliage here in Jeta's wood or burn it or use it in some other way, would you think he was gathering, burning or using you? 'No, sir.' And why not? Because it is not your self and has nothing to do with your self."[30]

Mr Norman has shown that passage B, in the light of passage A, must be understood as a satirical allusion to the identification of the world and the self - the identification which constitutes the most famous doctrine propounded in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣads*. That identification was the culmination of a theory of the equivalence between macrocosm and microcosm; the need for multiple, partial equivalences was short-circuited by identifying the soul/essence of the invidiual and of the world. The Buddha in a sense kept the equivalence, or at least parallelism, for he argued against a single essence at either level and so made macrocosm and microcosm equally devoid of soul/essence.

There seem to be verbal echoes of Yājñavalkya. The sixth wrong view in passage A is that after death I shall be *nicco, dhuvo* etc. Compare *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4, 4, 23: *eṣa nityo mahimā brāhmaṇasya* (the *brāhmaṇa* here being one who has realized his identity with *brahman*); 4,4,20: *aja ātmā mahān dhruvaḥ*. The third point of the *tilakkhaṇas, dukkha*, is not mentioned here, but is of course opposed to *ānanda*, as at *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3,9,28: *vijñānam ānandam brāhma* and 4,3,33: *athaiṣa eva parama ānandaḥ, eṣa brahmalokaḥ*. It remains only to remind readers of the most important and closest parallel of all. The fifth wrong view is to identify with what has been *diṭṭhaṃ sutaṃ mataṃ viññātaṃ*. What exactly is that? The answer is at *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 4,5,6: *ātmani khalv are dṛṣṭe śrute mate vijñāte idaṃ sarvaṃ viditam*. So here is the form of the microcosm-macrocosm equivalence to which the Buddha is alluding; and we can further see that his fifth wrong view is Yājñavalkya's realization of that identity in life, and his sixth the making real that identity at death. But, says the Buddha, this is something that does not exist *(asat)*.

Note that none of these parallels is recorded by the commentary. How could one argue that these statements were not made by the Buddha but produced by the later monastic tradition when that tradition, which certainly did produce the commentaries, appears not fully to understand them?

The Buddha did not reject everything that Yājñavalkya said. At *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 4,4,5, he says that by *puṇya karman* a person at death becomes *puṇya*, by *pāpa karman, pāpa*. Though the meaning of *puṇya karman* in brahminical literature had hitherto been "purifying ritual", the context here suggests a more general meaning. The passage is terse, so the meaning of *karman* is not spelt out; but it would be reasonable to suppose that what is meant is "act", ritual and ethical action are not being fully differentiated. The Buddha went much further in his revalorization of the term: "By act", he said, "I mean intention".[31] Familiarity has dulled our perception of how bold a use of language that is. Action is completely internalized - in this, transformed into its opposite. This goes just as far as saying that

25. See also my *Theravada Buddhism: a Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*, London, 1988. The relevant part of this book was written in 1980. It deals only with those aspects of the doctrine relevant to social history, mainly *kamma*; on that topic see further my "Notes on the brahmanical background to Buddhist ethics", in G.tare Dhammapala et al., eds., *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Hammalawa Saddhātissa*, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka, 1984, 91-101.

26. *Majjhima-nikāya*, sutta XXII. See especially Kamaleswar Bhattacharya, *"Diṭṭhaṃ, Sutaṃ, Mataṃ, Viññātaṃ"*, in Somaratna Balasooriya et al., ed., *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula*, London and Sri Lanka, 1980, 10-15, and references there cited. Bhattacharya's article deals with my passage A. He does not translate it, but he glosses it: "All these theories are false because they make of the Ātman an 'object', while the Ātman, the Absolute, the Being in itself, can never be an object." I can see no support in the text for this interpretation.

27. K.R.Norman, "A note on Attā in the *Alagaddūpama Sutta*", *Studies in Indian Philosophy: a Memorial Volume in honour of Pandit Sukhlalji Sanghvi*, LD series 84, Ahmedabad, 1981, 19-29.

28. In both extracts my translation eliminates repetitions.

29. *Majjhima-nikāya*, I, 135-36.

30. *Ibid.*, 140-41.

31. *Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi, Aṅguttara-nikāya*, III, 415.

someone whom the world thinks a brahmin could really be an outcaste, and vice versa.

The change in the meaning of "action" lies at the heart of Buddhism and is fundamental to the coherence of the system. The Buddha revalorized not only brahminical soteriology, but ritual too. I conclude by offering an important instance of such revalorization.[32]

According to the Buddha, our six senses (including the mind) and their objects are ablaze with the three fires of passion, hate and delusion, and the goal is to extinguish those fires. According to Buddhist tradition, the doctrine of the three fires was first enunciated in the Buddha's third sermon, the *Ādittapariyāya Sutta*. The *Vinaya* (I,23-35) presents this sermon as the culmination of a long story: the Buddha converts three brahmin ascetics (Uruvela Kassapa, Nadī Kassapa and Gayā Kassapa) by miracles he performs while staying in the building in which they keep their ritual fires; he persuades them to give up the *agnihotra* (Pāli *aggihutta*). Thus, just as the Enlightenment is represented by the allegory of the battle against Māra, the message of what T.S.Eliot[33] has made famous in our culture as "The Fire Sermon" is conveyed allegorically by the story of the three Kassapas. The link is made plain by the sermon's use of the fire metaphor.

The fires the Buddha sees burning are three because that number corresponds to the three permanently burning fires of the *āhitāgni*.[34] There could after all have been some other number; were the reference less specific, the same message could have been conveyed by talking of one, generalized fire, or maybe two, e.g. *taṇhā* and *avijjā*. To reach three, *taṇhā* has to be split into *rāga* and *dosa*, positive and negative.

My claim seems to be corroborated by an interesting sermon in which the Buddha gives an allegorical interpretation of the three fires which is somewhat like the (much later) one in *Manu*,[35] but depends on puns. I know of no modern discussion of this sermon, *Aṅguttara Nikāya, Sattaka Nipāta, Mahāyaññā Vagga, sutta XLIV*.[36] Since I find E.M. Hare's translation unsatisfactory, I offer my own, with some comments.[37]

"Once the Blessed One was staying at Jetavana in Anāthapiṇḍika's park in Sāvatthī. At that time the brahmin (a) Uggatasarīra (b) (Extended-Body, i.e., Fatty) had prepared a great sacrifice. Five hundred bulls and as many steers, heifers, goats and rams had been brought up to the sacrificial post for sacrifice. Then the brahmin went up to the Blessed One and greeted him, and after an exchange of courtesies he sat to one side. Then Uggatasarīra said to the Blessed One, 'Gotama, I have heard that it is very rewarding and advantageous to kindle (c) a fire and set up a sacrificial post'. The Blessed One agreed that he had heard the same; this conversation was twice repeated. 'Well then, Gotama, your ideas and ours, what you have heard and we have heard, agree perfectly' (d).

At this the Venerable Ānanda said, 'Brahmin, you should not question the Tathāgata (e) by saying what you did, but by telling him that you want to kindle a fire and set up a sacrificial post, and asking him to advise and instruct you so that it may be for your long-term benefit and welfare.' Then the brahmin asked the Blessed One so to advise him.

Brahmin, when one kindles a fire and sets up a sacrificial post, even before the sacrifice takes place one is setting up three knives which are morally wrong (f) and lead to painful results. The three are the knives of body, speech and mind. Even before the sacrifice, one thinks, 'Let this many animals be slaughtered for sacrifice.' So while thinking one is doing something purifying (g) one is doing something not purifying; while thinking one is doing right one is doing wrong; while thinking one is finding the way to a good rebirth one is finding the way to a bad. So the knife of mind comes first. Then one says, 'Let this many animals be slaughtered for sacrifice', and so under the same misapprehensions one is setting up the knife of speech next. Then one oneself initiates (h) the slaughter, and so sets up the third knife of body.

Brahmin, these are the three fires one should abandon, avoid, not serve: the fires of passion, hate and delusion. Why? Because a passionate person who is overcome and mentally controlled by passion does wrong in body, word and thought. So at the dissolution of the body, after death, he goes to a bad rebirth, to hell. The same goes for a hating and for a deluded person. So one should abandon these three fires.

Brahmin, these are the three fires one should honour, respect, worship and look after properly and well (i): the fire fit for oblations, the fire of the householder and the fire worthy of religious offerings (j).

Whoever the parents are (k), they, brahmin, are what is called the fire fit for oblations. Why? From that source, brahmin, was this person oblated, did he come into existence. So he should honour it and look after it. Whoever your children, wives, slaves, servants or workers are, they are

32. Most of the rest of this paper represents a revised version of part of my paper "Why there are three fires to put out", delivered at the conference of the International Association of Buddhist Studies in Bologna, July 1985. Though originally I revised it for publication in the proceedings of that conference, the convenor and editor, Professor Pezzali, has kindly let me know that the publication is still (in November 1987) not assured.

33. *"The Waste Land"*, 1922, Part III, especially the note on line 308.

34. The *āhitāgni* is the brahmin who has followed the ritual prescription of the Vedic (*śrauta*) tradition and keeps the fires burning for the purposes of his obligatory daily rites.

35. "Tradition holds that one's father is in fact the *gārhapatya* fire, one's mother the *dakṣiṇa*, one's teacher the *āhavanīya*; that triad of fires is the most important." *Manusmṛti*, II, 231.

36. Published by the Pali Text Society, *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, IV, 41-46.

37. The Pāli commentary on this *sutta* is short; it is published in the PTS edition as *Manorathapūraṇī*, IV, 29-30.

what is called the householder's fire. So that fire too should be honoured and looked after. The ascetics and brahmins who keep from intoxication and negligence, who keep to patience and restraint, who control, pacify and cool themselves (l), they are the fire worthy of religious offerings. So that fire too should be honoured and tended.

But, brahmin, this fire of wood should from time to time be kindled, from time to time be cared for, from time to time be put out (m), from time to time be stored (n).

At these words Uggatasarīra said to the Blessed One, 'Excellent, Gotama! From today forth please accept me as your lifelong disciple; I put my faith in you. Herewith I release all the animals and grant them life. Let them eat green grass and drink cool water, and let cool breezes blow upon them.'"

Notes on the above translation

a. *Contra* Hare, I construe as a genitive of agent with a past passive participle.

b. I assume a joke. The commentary (C) says he was so known because of both his physique *(attabhāva)* and his wealth.

c. *ādhānaṃ* (Hardy) must be the correct reading, not *ādānaṃ* (C).

d. C: *sabbena sabban ti sabbena sutena sabbaṃ sutaṃ. sameti saṃsandati.* The word *suta* recalls *śruti*, "sacred text".

e. Tathāgatā plural of respect?

f. "morally wrong" translates *akusala*; "right" and "wrong" below *kusala* and *akusala*.

g. "purifying" translates *puñña*; this is one of the fundamental puns or reinterpretations of Buddhism: for the Buddhist the term is virtually a synonym of *kusala*.

h. C reads *samārambhati* with v.l *samārabhati*, Hardy *samārabbhati*. Possibly connected with *ālabh* "to kill".

i. Hare's translation is grammatically impossible: "These three fires, when esteemed, revered, venerated, respected, must bring best happiness." *Parihātabbā* must be passive; as C says, it = *pariharitabbā*. For the phonetic change cf. *kātabba* < Sanskrit *kartavya*. *Parihātabbā* answers *pahātabbā* in the previous paragraph. The real difficulty lies in *sukhaṃ*, which is not normally a synonym of *sammā*. I suspect a corruption and venture the suggestion that what was intended was another pun, on *sukkhaṃ*, "dry", which is what fires should be kept. Not all the Buddha's puns are phonetically perfect; one must bear in mind that these started as

oral texts, so that small differences could be blurred, quite apart from the fact that in the Buddha's original dialect they may have been obliterated anyway. I know no parallel for *sukhaṃ / sukkhaṃ*, but occasional *dukha* for *dukkha* is guaranteed by metre.

j. The punning names of the three fires are of course untranslatable. The first, *āhuneyya*, is however a precise Pāli equivalent to *āhavanīya*, so the reference is changed but not the meaning. The second, *gahapataggi*, has turned "the fire of householdership" into "the fire of the householder"; losing the final *i* of *gahapati* by *sandhi* increases the phonetic similarity. The third name shows a greater gap between Sanskrit *dakṣiṇa* "south" and Pāli *dakkhiṇeyya*; but the latter implies a punning interpretation of *dakṣiṇāgni* as "the fire of sacrificial fees *(dakṣiṇā)*".

k. Hare's "the man who honoureth his father and his mother" is impossible; it is they, not their son, who must be worthy of honour. *Yassa* is difficult; the text of this passage shows several variants. The parallel point in the text about the third fire has *ye te*, with no variants. I would restore *ye*, or better still *ye 'ssa*,[38] at this point for the first two fires at lines 3 and 9, interpreting both *ye* and *te* as nominative plural, and posit that the corruption occurred because *te* was interpreted as *tava*, which would make good sense, and the relative changed to agree with it. For the third fire, *te = tava* would make little sense, so there was no corruption.

l. *parinibbāpenti*. In an article elsewhere[39] I have shown that this whole phrase is hard to translate appropriately because it has been clumsily lifted from quite a different context.

m. *nibbāpetabbo*.

n. C: *nikkhipitabbo ti yathā na vinassati evaṃ ṭhapetabbo:* "it is to be so placed that it does not go out". The flame could be transferred to some sheltered place or vessel.

It may not be fanciful to see in the Buddha's first allegorical fire an allusion to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*; the idea that one is oblated from one's parents is the same, and there may even be a verbal echo. Our text says one is *āhuto saṃbhūto*. Compare *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 6,2,13: "Gautama, woman is fire. Her lap is the firewood, her body-hair the smoke, her womb is flame, what he does inside is the embers, enjoyments are the sparks. In this very fire the gods offer semen; from that oblation *(āhuteḥ)* man comes into existence *(saṃbhavati)*."

Dr Chris Minkowski has kindly pointed out[40] that the last sentence of the *sutta* echoes a verse of the *Ṛgveda* X, 169, 1, which blesses cows, invoking for them

38. I am grateful to Professor Schmithausen for pointing out that *ye 'ssa* would be the neatest emendation.

39. See my article "Three souls, one or none: the vagaries of a Pāli pericope" referred to above in note 5.

40. In a letter to me after I had lectured at Brown University.

pleasant breezes, good grass and refreshing water. The words are different but the sentiments the same. The verse, which begins with the word *mayobhūr*, is prescribed for use in several *śrauta* and *gṛhya* rites.[41] He writes: "It appears to be an all-purpose benedictory verse for cows used both in daily routine and in ritual celebration. I think it is therefore quite possible that specifically this verse is echoed in the Buddhist text. As the Patty Brahmin let the cows go he recited the verse he would recite in letting them out to graze."

* * * * * * *

Let me sum up. I have argued that we (unlike the commentators) can see the Buddha's message in systematic opposition to beliefs and practices of his day, especially those of the educated class who inevitably constituted most of his audience and following. Texts, which by and large do not represent his precise words (or if they do, we can never know it), must have been composed during his lifetime. Unfortunately I have not made a close study of the *Aṭṭhaka* and *Pārāyaṇa Vagga*, but I would certainly see no *a priori* problem in allowing them to date from the Buddha's lifetime, because I believe that a lot of the texts must do so. To go further, and try to sort out which of the texts contemporary with the Buddha date from his early years I would think a hopeless enterprise.

Many years ago my aunt, a violinist, was employed to play in the orchestra attached to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon. She lodged with a working class family. She was astonished to discover one day that they did not believe that a man called Shakespeare had ever existed. "So who do you think wrote the plays?" she asked. "The Festival Committee, of course", came the pitying reply. I am content to be a loyal nephew. On the other hand we must remember that if the plays had never been published the role of the Committee might indeed be crucial.

41. The verse is used in the *aśvamedha*, for instance; but its use in *gṛhya* rites may better account for its being known to Buddhists. Minkowski writes: "As [householders] let their cows out to graze they should recite *mayobhūḥ* etc. (*Āśvalayana Gṛhya Sūtra* 2,10,5). Or when they come back from grazing and are back in the pen (*Śāṃkhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 3,9,5). There is also a *gṛhya* festival performed on the full moon of Kārttikī when the cows are honoured and the *mayobhūr* verse is recited (*Śāṃkhāyana G.S.* 3,11,15)."

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HOW THE MAHĀYĀNA BEGAN*

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I would like to put forward for discussion what I believe to be a new hypothesis. This hypothesis can be simply stated. It is that the rise of the Mahāyāna is due to the use of writing. To put it more accurately: the early Mahāyāna texts owe their survival to the fact that they were written down; any earlier texts which deviated from or criticized the canonincal norms (by which I mean approximately the contents of the *Vinaya Khandhaka* and *Suttavibhaṅga* and the Four *Nikāyas*) could not survive because they were not included among the texts which the Saṅgha preserved orally.

Few Indologists have publicly reflected on how unusual a feat was performed by the early Buddhists in preserving a large corpus of texts for a long period - probably three to four centuries - purely by word of mouth. An admirable exception is the article by Lance Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature,"[1] which so far as I know has not yet had the recognition it deserves. Cousins in fact devotes less than six pages to the oral character of the earliest Pāli texts, and as my approach is somewhat different from his I shall have to cover some of the same ground again. But I hope to prove the truth of his claim that "consideration of the oral nature of the *Nikāyas* offers several profitable lines of historical investigation."[2]

Oral literature has been preserved all over the world, but modern research has shown that for the most part this literature is re-created at every re-telling. Verse epic and folk tale alike may have contents preserved over centuries, but they tend to be composed anew, often by professionals or semi-professionals, from a vast repertoire of clichés, stock phrases. That the preservation of oral literature may appear fairly informal must not make us forget that it depends nevertheless on institutions, on recognized and regular arrangements for training, rehearsal and performance.

The early Buddhists wished to preserve the words of their great teacher, texts very different in character from the general run of oral literature, for they presented logical and sometimes complex arguments. The precise wording mattered. Cousins has rightly drawn attention to the typical oral features of the *suttantas*; great use

* The editor of the present publication would like to express his gratitude to Professor Egaku Mayeda for permission to include here this paper which has been originally published in the *Journal of Pali and Buddhist Studies* I, Nagoya, March 1988, 29-46.

1. L.S. Cousins, "Pali Oral Literature", in P.T. Denwood and A. Piatigorsky, eds., *Buddhist Studies Ancient and Modern*, London, 1983, 1-11.

2. *Ibid.*, 9.

of mnemonic lists, stock passages (clichés) and redundancy. He further points out that the differences between the versions of the texts preserved by various sects and in various languages are much what we would expect of oral texts.

> "These divergences are typically greatest in matters of little importance - such items as the locations of *suttas*, the names of individual speakers or the precise order of events. Only very rarely are they founded on doctrinal or sectarian differences."[3]

In corroboration I might add that the Buddhist tradition itself was well aware of this distinction. In its account of how the Canon came to be compiled at the First Council, the introduction to the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* frankly says [4] that words of the narrative portions were inserted on that occasion, and thus clearly distinguishes between the words attributed to the Buddha and their settings. From the religious point of view this is perfectly understandable: the narrative framework of the sayings is not relevant to salvation.

Where I slightly differ from Cousins, as will appear, is in his stress on the probable improvisatory element in early recitations of the Buddha's preachings. The whole purpose of the enterprise (as certainly Cousins would agree) was to preserve the Buddha's words. I think the earliest Pāli texts may well be rather like the Rajasthani folk epic studied and described by John Smith, [5] in which the essential kernel is in fact preserved verbatim, but variously wrapped up in a package of conventional verbiage which can change with each performance.[5] It is significant that this is done by a class of professional performers who are mostly illiterate.

3. *Ibid.*, 5.

4. I, 12: *saṃbandha-vacana-mattaṃ...pakkhipitvā*. Literally means "only interpolating connecting words"; this is less than the narrative items to which Cousins is referring. The text would not go so far in imputing their own veracity. But the passage does make the essential distinction between what is *Buddha-vacana*, "the words of the Buddha", and may therefore not be tampered with, and what is not.

5. J.D. Smith, *"The Singer or the Song*: A Reassessment of Lord's 'Oral Theory'", *Man* (N.S.) 12, 1977, 141-53. It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of Smith's observations for the study of oral literature in general and early Indian texts in particular. On analyzing his recordings of performances of an oral epic by performers who had never met, Smith found that though they even varied in metre, they shared a common nucleus which conveyed all the important meaning. When the words of this nucleus are put together, they form a metrical text, and "it is easy to demonstrate that [that text] exists in what is, in essence, a single unitary form memorised by all its performers" (page 146). This nuclear text shows only unimportant variations, in such matters as order, grammar and use of synonyms (page 147). Yet what is extraordinary is that this nuclear text is never presented as a unity, but only word by word or phrase by phrase, each fragment being embedded in "large quantities of semantically lightweight verbal material" (page 145). This means that though what is remembered is basically metrical, it is presented in a form which destroys that metre. This shows how complex the relation between verse and prose could become.

Be that as it may, I suggest that it would never have occurred to the Buddhists that such a feat of preservation was even possible had they not had before them the example of the brahmins. Already for centuries the brahmins had been orally preserving their sacred texts, Vedic literature, by making that preservation virtually coterminous with their education. That education, which was the right and the duty of every brahmin male, might last up to 36 years;[6] it consisted of memorizing Vedic texts, and in some cases also subsidiary treatises (*vedāṅga*). By the time of the Buddha, Vedic literature was too vast to be memorized by any single person except perhaps the rare genius; it was divided into various branches (*śākhā*) of oral tradition.

Vedic literature contains both verse and prose texts. The oldest corpus of texts, the *Ṛgveda*, is a collection of hymns in verse, arranged in ten 'books' (*maṇḍala*); the six 'family books', *maṇḍala* II-VII, which constitute its kernel, are arranged in order of length, from the shortest to the longest.[7] A hymn is called a *sūkta*, literally '(that which is) well spoken'. The later Vedic texts are mostly in prose. It is generally held, and I agree, that at the time of the Buddha (whenever exactly that was) only the few earliest *Upaniṣads* existed. The *Upaniṣads* constitute the latest stratum of the *Veda* and are known as its 'conclusion', *anta*, in the logical as well as the purely temporal sense.

I believe that the Buddhist canon has left us more clues that it is modelled on Vedic literature than has been generally recognized. In my view, early Buddhist poems were called *sūkta*, which in Pāli (and other forms of Middle Indo-Aryan) becomes *sutta*, as in *Suttanipāta*. Literally a *sūkta* is synonymous with a *subhāṣita*, something 'well spoken', in this case by the Buddha or one of his immediate disciples; but the word also alludes to the *Veda*. I am of course aware that many centuries later *sutta* was re-Sanskritized as *sūtra*. A *sūtra* is however a recognized genre of Sanskrit literature, a prose text composed with the greatest possible brevity, so that it can normally not be understood without a lengthy commentary. No early Pāli text is anything like that. I would even go further, and tentatively suggest that if Pāli *sutta* can equal Sanskrit *veda*, Pāli *suttanta* can equal Sanskrit *vedānta*; then the prose texts of the Buddha's discourses are the 'conclusions' of the Buddhist sacred literature.

These linguistic remarks are however speculative, and even if they are shown to be wrong, this would not affect my main argument at all. It is a fact that parts of the Pāli Canon are arranged on the Vedic principle of increasing length of units: the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (parallel to the *Ekottara-āgama*); the *Thera-* and *Therī-gāthās*; the *Jātaka*; and - most interestingly - the poems of a section of the *Suttanipāta*, the *Aṭṭhakavagga*. There is an episode in the Canon[8] in which the Buddha asks a young

6. *Manusmṛti*, III, 1. The text there refers to the three *Vedas*; but it was presumably only those who aspired to be schoolteachers who attempted that feat.

7. "...books II-VII, if allowance is made for later additions, form a series of collections which contain a successively increasing number of hymns." Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, reprinted in Delhi, 1965, 34.

8. *Vinaya*, I, 196 = *Udāna* V, 6. In the latter passage it says that the monk recited sixteen poems, in the *Vinaya* merely that he recited 'all'.

monk whom he is meeting for the first time to tell him some *Dhamma*; the monk recites the whole *Aṭṭhakavagga* and the Buddha commends him. The text does not specifically say who originally composed the poems of the *Aṭṭhakavagga*; it could be the Buddha himself; it could be the young monk's teacher, Mahākaccāna, who was a reputed preacher; it could be yet other monks; and it could be a combination of these, since not all the poems need be by the same author. But what is clear is that this set of *sixteen* poems was collected early and arranged on the *Ṛgvedic* principle, by increasing length.

As mentioned above, numbered lists are an important mnemonic device, and they are indeed omni-present in the literature of both early Buddhism and early Jainism. Another such device is redundancy. The earliest Buddhist prose texts are clogged with repetitions. The brahmins went to extraordinary lengths in preserving the *Ṛgveda* by memorizing the words in various patterns. This did not appeal to the Buddhists, probably because of their stress on the meaning of the texts; but the endless redundancies of the patterns of words in the Pāli *Abhidhamma* texts do somewhat recall the Vedic *Kramapāṭha*, *Jaṭāpāṭha* and *Ghanapāṭha*[9] in their formal character. A third mnemonic device is versification. The stricter the metre, the easier it is to preserve the wording. The *anuṣṭubh* / *vatta* metre is thus less effective for this purpose than the stricter metres in which most of the *Suttanipāta* is composed.

Obviously there was no means of preserving the Buddha's words as he spoke them. They had to be formalized in texts, prose or verse, deliberate compositions which were then committed to memory, and later systematically transmitted to pupils. Were this not so, they would have been lost, like the teachings of the teachers contemporary to the Buddha who are mentioned in the Canon, notably in the *Sāmaññaphala-suttanta*. The case of Jainism is particularly instructive. According to the Digambara tradition, the oldest texts preserved are not the original canon: that has been lost.[10] It seems to me highly unlikely that such a tradition would have arisen were it not true, whereas one can easily understand the motivation for the opposite view, taken by the Śvetāmbara Jains, that the texts preserved are in fact part of the original canon. All Jains agree that some of their canon was lost at an early stage. The Śvetāmbara tradition divided monks into those who were *jinakappa*, the solitary wandering ascetics striving for liberation in this lifetime, and the *therakappa*,[11] professional monks concerned to preserve the Jain tradition, and in particular the scriptures. This precisely mirrors the distinction introduced into the Buddhist Theravādin Saṅgha, probably in the late first century B.C., between monks who were to undertake the *vipassanādhura*, the duty of meditating and so attaining *nirvāṇa* themselves, and those who undertook the *ganthadhura*, the duty of preserving the books, i.e. the Buddhist scriptures.[12] But here I am running ahead of my story.

My point is that from the first the institution which performed the function of preserving the Buddhist texts must have been the Saṅgha. Whether we choose to consider that initially this function was overt or latent does not matter. Certainly the Buddha's primary conception of the Saṅgha was as an association of men and women trying to reach *nirvāṇa* and creating conditions which facilitated this quest for all of them. But the Saṅgha was a missionary organization too: the first sixty monks were dispatched to preach to whoever would listen.[13] That is of course well known. But somehow scholars have not given much thought to the mechanics of how they would have remembered what to preach, and then how their converts, who had not met the Buddha himself, would have remembered it in their turn. It is my contention that the preservation of the texts required organization, and that the Buddhist laity were never orginized in a way which would have ensured the transmission of texts down the generations.

I must not be misunderstood as saying that only monks and nuns knew texts by heart. What I am saying is that only they were so organized that they could hand them on to future generations. An interesting passage in the *Vinaya*[14] says that a monk may interrupt his rains retreat for up to seven days if a layman or laywoman summons him with the message that he or she knows a text and is afraid it will get lost - in other words, that it needs to be passed on to the Saṅgha. We do not know how the Saṅgha was organized for this purpose in the earliest period. Several times in the Canon monks are referred to as *vinaya-dhara*, *dhamma-dhara* and *mātikā-dhara*, which means that they had memorized respectively monastic rules, sermons (*suttanta*), or the lists of terms which later developed into the *Abhidhamma* works. But I know of no passage which makes it clear whether these were ever exclusive specialisms. Later monks certainly did specialize in memorizing particular texts or groups of texts,[15] and this apparently continued even after they had been committed to writing in the first century B.C. According to the introduction to the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, the *Vinayapiṭaka* was entrusted to Upāli and his followers (*nissitaka*) and each of the four *Nikāyas* similarly to an important monk and his followers.[16] Since Buddhaghosa is merely editing the commentaries, which were written down with the Canon, I assume that this statement reflects the way that the Saṅgha was organized for memorizing the texts in the first century B.C. We do not know how much older this division of labour - reminiscent of the brahmin *śākhā* - can be. But the logic of the situation suggests that from the first monks must have specialized, being taught texts first by their own teachers and then by other monks they encountered both in their monasteries and on their travels; and that the Councils (*saṅgāyanā*), better termed Communal Recitations, served the

9. Macdonell, *op. cit.*, 42.

10. P.S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, Berkeley and Delhi, 1979, 51.

11. Colette Caillat, *Les expiations dans le rituel ancien des religieux jaina*, Paris, 1965, 50. In contrast to the ancient tradition of the solitary ascetic, followed by the *jinakappa*, the *therakappa* monks were not allowed to be alone, or normally even in pairs. Caillat does not relate this to the question of preserving the tradition; I owe this idea to a conversation with Will Johnson.

12 Walpola Rahula, *History of Buddhism in Ceylon: the Anuradhapura Period*, Colombo, 1956, 158-61.

13. *Vinaya*, I, 21.

14. *Ibid.*, 140-41.

15. Details in E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Migoda, 1946, chapter 3.

16. *Vinaya*, I, 13, 15.

function of systematizing knowledge and perhaps of organizing its further preservation. In fact, the very division of the sermons into the four *Nikāyas* was probably for this purpose, and I suspect that the four *Nikāyas* basically represent four traditions of memorization. It may be significant that in the passage of the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* already cited the four *Nikāyas* are referred to as four *saṅgīti*s and the *Dīgha-nikāya* as the *Dīghasaṅgīti*.[17] The words *saṅgīti* and *saṅgāyanā* are, of course, synonymous.

The Canon itself has preserved traces of how all this worked, and even shows that the Buddhists were conscious of the contrast in this respect between themselves and the Jains. The *Saṅgīti-suttanta* has it that at the death of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta his followers began to disagree about what he had actually preached.[18] Sāriputta makes this the occasion for rehearsing a summary of the Buddha's teaching arranged in numbered lists of increasing length. It does not matter whether the text faithfully records a historical incident (which we can never know for certain); the point is rather that the Buddhists were aware that this kind of systematic rehearsal was necessary if Buddhism was to be preserved as a coherent doctrine and way of life (discipline) and I cannot conceive how it could in fact have survived had such occasions not taken place. In another text[19] the Buddha is reported as saying that four conditions make for the forgetting (*sammosa*) and disappearance of the true teaching (*saddhamma*). The first is if monks memorize the texts incorrectly. Another is if learned monks who know the texts do not take care to rehearse others in reciting them.[20]

A corollary of all this is that once meetings of monks (whether or not these correspond to the First and Second Councils of tradition) had decided what was to be memorized, it must have been difficult, if not impossible, to slip a new text into the curriculum. That is not to claim that no change occurred; but the changes must have been mostly unintentional, due to lapses of memory and to the contamination of texts as someone's memory slipped from one text to another. We learn of such a body of authorized texts from the passages[21] in the *Mahāparinibbāna-suttanta* concerning what Rhys Davids translates as the four "Great Authorities" (*mahāpadesa*). Actually this translation is misleading, for the number four refers to the instances of referral to authority, not to the number of authorities. Of those there is but one. When anyone claims to have an authentic text, its authenticity is to be judged simply by seeing whether it harmonizes with the texts (*sutta* and *vinaya*) already current in the Saṅgha. If not, it is to be rejected: the Saṅgha will not try to preserve it.

Under these circumstances, any text which is critical of the current teachings or

17. *Ibid.*, I, 14.

18. *Dīgha-nikāya*, III, 209-210. The same passage occurs at III, 117-18, and *Majjhima*, II, 243-44.

19. *Aṅguttara*, II, 147.

20. *Ye te bhikkhū bahussutā āgatāgamā dhammadharā vinayadharā mātikādharā te na sakkacca suttantaṃ paraṃ vācenti tesaṃ accayena chinnamūlako suttanto hoti apatisaraṇo.*

21. *Dīgha-nikāya*, II, 123-26.

introduces something which is palpably new has no chances of survival. It is possible that hundreds or even thousands of monks, nuns and Buddhist lay followers had visions or other inspirations which put new teachings into their minds, possible that they composed texts embodying those teachings - but we shall never know. For without writing those texts could not be preserved.

earliest writing

Archaeology has recovered no piece of writing in India which can definitely be dated earlier than the inscriptions of Aśoka. It is however generally agreed that the fact that in Aśokan inscriptions the Brahmī script shows some regional variety proves that it must have been introduced a while earlier. It is *prima facie* probable that writing was first used for two purposes: by businessmen for keeping accounts and by rulers for public administration. This in fact fits what we learn from the *Vinayapiṭaka*.

only one

The *Vinaya* is the only part of the Pāli Canon to mention books or writing. There are mentions in the *Jātaka* book but only in the prose part, which is commentary, not canonical text. It is sometimes said[22] that books are mentioned in the *Dīgha-nikāya*, but that is almost certainly incorrect. The single passage in question is at *Dīgha* III, 94, in the *Aggañña-suttanta*, where brahmins are being lampooned. By a joking pun they as students of the *Veda* are said to be 'non-meditators' (*ajjhāyaka*); they settle near towns and villages and make *ganthe*. Later *gantha* certainly comes to mean a book; but basically it means 'knot'. In the *Suttanipāta*[23] brahmins are said to 'knot together *mantras*' - the words are *mante ganthetvā* - and the reference is to their composing Vedic texts. The metaphor is much the same as that in *sūtra*, the 'stringing together' of a text, and that in *tantra*, in which a text is 'woven'. Though the Rhys Davids translate *ganthe* at *Dīgha* III, 94 as 'books', they do not seem to mean by this books as physical objects, for they quote and correctly translate the commentary on the word: "compiling the three *Vedas* and teaching others to repeat them."[24]

To present the evidence concerning writing in the *Vinayapiṭaka* I can do no better than attempt to summarize what was so admirably said more than a century ago by Rhys Davids and Oldenberg in the introduction to their translations of *Vinaya* texts.[25] "In the first place, there are several passages which confirm in an indisputable manner the existence of the art of writing at the time when the *Vinaya* texts were put into their present shape."[26] There is a reference to a royal notice about an absconding thief.[27] There is a reference to writing as a 'superior craft' (*ukkaṭṭha sippa*).[28] There is a reference to tempting someone to suicide by

22. e.g., by Schopen in the article cited below, p. 171, n. 46.

23. *Suttanipāta*, 302 and 306.

24. T.W. Rhys Davids and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part III, London, 1921, 90.

25. T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg, *Vinaya Texts*, Part I, SBE XIII, Oxford, 1881.

26. Rhys Davids and Oldenburg, *op. cit.*, xxxii.

27. *Vinaya*, I, 43.

28. *Ibid.*, IV, 7. This passage is not referred to by Rhys Davids and Oldenberg.

means of a written message,[29] And though the nuns are forbidden 'animal arts' (*tiracchāna vijjā*), there is no fault in their learning to write. (This last reference[30] is brief and obscure, but my feeling is that Rhys Davids, Oldenberg and Miss Horner have all misinterpreted it and it refers to drawing amulets, something like *yantra*.)[31] "But it is a long step from the use of writing for such public or private notifications to the adoption of it for the purpose of recording an extensive and sacred literature."[32] At this point Rhys Davids and Oldenberg might have added that brahmins did not write down their scriptures for many centuries after writing came into use among them; but they wished to restrict access to their scriptures to the top three *varṇas*, whereas Buddhists had no desire to keep theirs secret.

> "Had the sacred texts been written down and read, books, manuscripts, and the whole activity therewith connected, must have necessarily played a very important part in the daily life of the members of the Buddhist Order."[33]

The *Vinaya* mentions every item of property allowed to a monk and every utensil found in a monastery, but it never mentions either manuscripts or writing materials of any kind. But on the other hand there are several references to the need to acquire a text by learning it orally.

The Pāli commentaries record that the texts were first written down when it was found that there was only one monk alive who still knew a canonical text, the *Mahāniddesa*.[34] We have seen above that earlier when it seemed that there was only one person who still knew a text a monk was enjoined to interrupt his rains retreat to go and learn it. In the first century B.C. a surer technique was put to use.

The Pāli Canon (with commentaries) was finally written down for fear of losing it. Maybe it is a corollary of this fact that the *Pātimokkha* as such is not a canonical text. It is of course embedded in the *Suttavibhaṅga*. But maybe no need was felt to make manuscripts of the code which every monk had to know by heart. A text in constant use is in less danger of being forgotten.

29. *Ibid.*, III, 76.
30. *Ibid.*, IV, 305.
31. The text unhelpfully glosses *tiracchāna vijjā* as "whatever is external, not beneficial" (*yaṁ kiñci bāhirakaṁ anatthasaṁhitaṁ*). If she learns it word by word (or line by line?) (*padena*) each word (or line) constitutes an offence; if syllable by syllable, each syllable. But there is no offence in learning *lekhaṁ, dhāraṇaṁ* or *guttatthāya parittaṁ*. Of these three exemptions, only the last is clear: it means "a (specific Buddhist) text recited for protection". The second Horner translates as "what is memorised", but that makes no sense at all, for whatever she learns is presumably memorized. As it is not to *paritta* I assume it is also something like a protective spell, and so the equivalent of Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* (a word not attested in Pāli, so that it is unclear whether one should emend to *dhāraṇiṁ* or just assume that the Pāli equivalent is *dhāraṇā*). That leaves *lekhā*. My general interpretation is that what is forbidden in general is magic, but specific kinds of white magic are permitted.
32. Rhys Davids and Oldenberg, *op. cit.*, xxxiii.
33. *Ibid.*
34. Rahula, *op. cit.*, 158.

There has long been a general consensus that the earliest surviving Mahāyāna texts go back to the second or first century B.C. This chronology, albeit imprecise, clearly fits the time when writing came more into use and it was possible to commit large texts to writing. Maybe this had something to do with better materials. To discuss in detail the use of writing for brahmanical Sanskrit works is both beyond my competence and unnecessary here, but I may remark that Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* is clearly a written, not an oral text, and it is commonly dated to the second century B.C., on rather strong evidence.

It may be objected that written works too may perish, and are likely to do so unless an institution guards them. To this I would agree; but it is not an objection to my hypothesis. Certainly the great majority of Mahāyāna - indeed, of *all* later Buddhist - works were lost in their original versions in Indian languages. But many did survive long enough to be translated into Chinese and / or Tibetan, and that is all that my hypothesis requires. A single manuscript in a monastic library, studied by no one, could be picked up and read, even translated,by a curious browser or visiting scholar.

This ends the real argument for my hypothesis, so that my article could end here. But it would be a pity not to mention that the early Mahāyāna texts themselves offer what might be seen as corroborative evidence. It is well known that the *Lotus Sūtra* commends the enshrinement of wriiten scriptures in *stūpas* as the equivalent of corporeal relics. Dr Gregory Schopen has shown[35] that early Mahāyāna texts, even before the *Lotus Sūtra*, have a veritable 'cult of the book'. In those early texts, he writes, "the merit derived from the cult of the book is always expressed in terms of its comparative superiority to that derived from the *stūpa* / relic cult."[36] By book here is meant manuscript; and Schopen shows that the text typically prescribes and glorifies its own worship in written form. Schopen's otherwise brilliant article is slighlty marred by an occasional failure to distinguish 'the book' as a written object from texts in general; and I think he may lay too much stress on the localization of the cult. My feeling is that these texts preserve a sense of wonder at this marvellous invention which permits an individual's opinions or experiences to survive whether or not anyone agrees or cares. In a sense they are celebrating their own survival. *Scripta manent* goes the Latin tag: "Writings survive." But perhaps only the Buddhists wrote panegyrics on it.

I should perhaps conclude by remarking that although there are several other theories current about the origin of the Mahāyāna, my hypothesis does not, so far as I am aware, either refute or corroborate any of them, since it approaches the problem on a different level. To put it differently: the other theories mainly say what is different about Mahāyāna, but they do not say why that different form of

35. G. Schopen, "The Phrase 'pṛthivipradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet' in the Vajracchedikā: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna", *IIJ*, 17, 1975, 147-81.
36. Schopen, *op. cit.*, 169. As Schopen goes on to show, this evidence seems to refute the theory that early Mahāyāna is specifically associated with the cult of corporeal relics; if anything, it suggests the opposite.

religion should have (apparently) arisen when it did. My hypothesis, I repeat, is that different forms of Buddhism may have arisen earlier, but we shall never know, for they were doomed to be ephemeral. I am not siding with those who claim that the Mahāyāna represents an aspect of the Buddha's teaching which was somehow preserved 'underground', maybe among the laity, till it surfaced in the texts we have; on the contrary, my argument is precisely that such a thing is impossible.

The most widespread view of the matter is that the Mahāyāna is the Buddhism of the laity. By and large I disagree with that theory. I hope to show in other publications[37] that it rests on a misconception of what it was to be a Buddhist layman in ancient India. I strongly agree, of course, that the earliest Buddhism was primarily a religion of the Saṅgha; and that was for many reasons, not merely for the one with which this paper has been concerned. The other reasons remained valid even after the introduction of writing for recording scriptures. But certainly there were laymen - albeit a small minority - who knew how to write, so that it became technically possible for a layman to write down his own religious views. Whether there were any institutions other than Buddhist monasteries which were likely to preserve such writings is another matter.

37. For instance in *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*, London, 1988, 74-76; and in "Comment une religion se définit elle-même: le bouddhisme", *Le Grand Atlas des Religions*, Encyclopaedia Universalis, Paris, 1988, 36-7.

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PĀLI PHILOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF BUDDHISM

K.R. Norman

In the *Times* for 10 October 1987 there appeared an article which began with these words:

> "More than 5,000 manuscripts contain all or part of the New Testament in its original language. These range in date from the second century up to the invention of printing. It has been estimated that no two agree in all particulars. Inevitably, all hand written documents are liable to contain accidental errors in copying. However, in living theological works it is not surprising that deliberate changes were introduced to avoid or alter statements that the copyist found unsound. There was also a tendency for copyists to add explanatory glosses. Deliberate changes are more likely to have been introduced at an early stage before the canonical status of the New Testament was established. If one argues that no one manuscript contains the original, unaltered text in its entirety, then one cannot select any one of these manuscripts and rely exclusively on its text as if it contained the monopoly of the original words of the original authors."

The article went on to point out that if one further argues that the original text has survived somewhere among the thousands of extant manuscripts, then one is forced to read all these manuscripts, to assemble the differences between them in a systematic way, and then to assess, variant by variant, which manuscripts have the original and which the secondary text. It is not surprising that such a prospect has daunted many biblical scholars who have been content to rely on the printed texts of earlier ages, in which the evidence of only a few favoured manuscripts was used. Even many recent printed editions of the Greek New Testament, and modern translations based on these, have usually followed this practice of building their text on a narrow base that is unlikely to be entirely original. All those who read theological literature and, in particular, commentaries on the books of the New Testament will be aware that interpretation can often depend on the precise definition of a word, phrase or verse. There can be no doubt that the precise form of the original text is a matter of crucial concern.

That article was referring to the second part of an edition of the Gospel according to St Luke,[1] a gospel which was selected to inaugurate an enterprise intended to provide the scholarly world with a comprehensive collection of variant

1. *The Gospel according to St Luke*, Part II, chapters 13-24, edited by the American and British committees of the International Greek New Testament Project, Oxford University Press, 1987.

readings in the Greek New Testament. For that edition it was decided to display all significant variant readings in more than two hundred of those manuscripts which contain St Luke's Gospel, as well as early translations of the Gospel, and quotations from the Gospel in the works of the early Church fathers. At one stage more than two hundred and sixty readers were engaged in studying and collating microfilms of the Greek manuscripts utilized, and many scholars over many years have been involved in the preparation of the work.

Reading the beginning of the article I was struck by how close, *mutatis mutandis*, is the situation with regard to the books of the Pāli canon. Reading, however, about the way in which this particular edition was made, I was struck by the complete contrast to the way in which many editions of Pāli texts have been, and are, I fear, still being, made. Leaving aside those texts which have been edited from a single manuscript because, unfortunately, only one single manuscript has so far come to light, anyone who reads the editor's preface to many of the editions published by the Pali Text Society will be amazed at the small number of manuscripts which editors have thought would be sufficient for them to utilize when performing their task. In some cases editors have been content to reproduce the readings of one or more oriental printed editions, often without attempting to ascertain the basis for such editions. For example, the Pali Text Society edition of the *Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā* is based upon, and is in effect a transcription of, a single printed edition, that in Sinhalese script in the Simon Hewavitarne Bequest Series. It occasionally gives variant readings from that edition. Volume I of the Pali Text Society edition of the *Papañcasūdanī*, the commentary upon the *Majjhima-nikāya*, is based upon two Sinhalese manuscripts, two Sinhalese printed editions and a Burmese manuscript of the *Ṭīkā*, i.e. the subcommentary upon the *Papañcasūdanī*, which could, at best, have given help with whatever words are quoted in the lemmata. From Volume II onwards the basis of the edition was three printed editions, one being one of the Sinhalese editions used for Volume I, and the other two being editions in the Burmese and Thai scripts. No information whatsoever is given about the basis for these oriental editions, nor are any variant readings quoted from them. No information is given about the principles followed in establishing the text of the Pali Text Society edition, and we are left to suppose that, when the oriental editions differed, the editor of each volume selected arbitrarily whatever readings appealed most to him or her. Other editions have been printed without the benefit of proof-reading, in part or in whole, and one was actually printed with spaces, rather than hyphens, between component parts of compounds, because the Founder's widow, acting as General Editor, was mindful of her dead husband's dislike of hyphens[2] and arbitrarily ordered the printer to remove all those inserted by the editor in his manuscript. This he did, but he omitted to close up the consequent gaps.

It is doubtful whether these facts are known to many of those who write about Theravāda Buddhism, and who happily base their work upon texts which have been edited in this way, and the translations based upon such texts. Even those who are aware of such deficiencies frequently do nothing about it either because they do not

2. See M.M. Bose, ed., *Itivuttaka-aṭṭhakathā*, vol. II, London, 1936, iii.

have the time, or because they are not sufficiently competent in the Pāli language to remedy the matter. It may justifiably be asked whether the errors which may remain in the editions of Pāli texts really matter, and whether they are likely to have resulted in any misunderstanding of the basic and most important elements of Buddhism. My simple answer is that I do not know, because I am not competent to judge the relevant importance of Buddhist doctrines, but, as a matter of principle, I would regret any errors of facts, however trivial, or interpretation of those facts, if they arose from an error in an edition of a Pāli text, just as no New Testament scholar worthy of the name would be happy about anyone working with a text which he knew to be less than perfect.

It seems to me that the situation in other fields of Buddhist studies is not so very different. The main difference is that, in the area of Hīnayāna Sanskrit texts at least, the number of manuscripts concerned is much smaller, and in many cases, when we come to consider the texts from Gilgit or Turfan, we are talking about unique manuscripts or fragments of manuscripts. It is not clear that some of those making use of these manuscripts realize the implications of this. When we talk about the deficiencies of a Pāli edition based upon one or two manuscripts or printed texts, we are doing so in the knowledge that, if we compare this handful of source materials with all the manuscripts which we know to be available in the libraries of the world, such a small number is not likely to be a wide enough sample to ensure correctness. Why then should we accept that the unique Kharoṣṭhī *Dharmapada* is likely to be a correct version of the *Dharmapada* of the Dharmaguptaka school, or a section of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya* from Gilgit represents the authentic version of that text in every respect?

We have evidence that there were variations in the versions of such texts which these schools had, as Schmithausen has shown us very recently,[3] and if we find such discrepancies in the few versions of any one text which the sands of Chinese Turkestan have given up, or which have come to light in Kashmir, then what would the situation be if we had a far wider and more representative sample of the literature of the Hīnayāna schools? I am well aware of the fact that scholars working in such fields sometimes say that they can compare their texts with the Tibetan or Chinese translations, and by emending them in the light of those translations they can arrive at a correct version of (say) the Mūlasarvāstivādin *Vinaya*. To them I would say that it may be possible by comparing the Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese versions of such a text to come to an agreed reading of a particular passage, but it must be realized that in most cases the Tibetan and Chinese versions have no independent authority. They were made from Sanskrit originals, and all such a comparison can do is to confirm the reading of the Sanskrit text from which those translations were made.

In some cases it may be thought sufficient to do this, but in reality our aims should be greater than this. We know very little about the translation techniques

3. See L. Schmithausen, "Beiträge zur Schulzugehörigkeit und Textgeschichte kanonischer und postkanonischer Materialien", in H. Bechert, ed.: *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, Zweiter Teil, Göttingen, 1987, 304-81.

which were adopted by those early translators and we have no idea what steps were taken to ensure that the manuscript or manuscripts from which they were making their translation contained a correct version of the text. We know from the records of the Chinese pilgrims that they sometimes obtained a single manuscript of a text to take back to China, from which in due course they or their successors made their translation. Without more information we cannot be certain that the Sanskrit (or very occasionally Pāli) version from which they made their translation was free from errors. Even if it was, then we must remember that that Sanskrit version was in turn, a translation from some variety of Middle Indo-Aryan dialect, and even if we can establish the form of the Sanskrit version correctly, all it tells us is what the person or persons responsible for making that translation thought his Middle Indo-Aryan exemplar meant. It does not prove that he was correct in his interpretation. It cannot be emphasised too much that all the versions of canonical Hīnayāna Buddhist texts which we possess are translations, and even the earliest we possess are translations of some still earlier version, now lost.

Clearly, for the study of Theravāda Buddhism accurate editions of Pāli texts are essential. We must then face the question: "What is an accurate edition of a Pāli text?" Here the variations between regional versions may cause problems. If we find, for example, that the Burmese edition of the first verse of the *Suttanipāta* contains the word *visaṭa*, with retroflex *-ṭ-*, while the Sinhalese edition has *visaṭa*, with dental *-t-*, then we have to recognize the fact that we may be faced, not with a correct reading as opposed to an incorrect one, but with a fundamental dialect difference of Middle Indo-Aryan, whereby *-ṭ-* followed by a dental *-t-* may or may not change that dental *-t-* to retroflex *-ṭ-* before it disappears. Consequently both readings may be correct in Pāli, and both may be original, since both may go back to dialects of Middle Indo-Aryan which are older than Pāli, perhaps back to the time of the Buddha. In short, the Buddha may well have used both versions in different recitations of the same text in different dialects. This aspect of Middle Indo-Aryan philology has not always been clear to scholars, even very eminent scholars, and as a result we find such statements as "the alternative spelling *visaṭaṃ*... is supported by the [Gāndhārī] Prakrit [and] should certainly be restored to the text",[4] with a multitude of suggestions as to how the word should be taken. In this situation we should bear in mind the fact that the redactor of the *Udānavarga*, who most likely had something very similar to the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* as his exemplar, was able to recognize that the word was to be identified with Sanskrit *viṣṭa*.[5]

In some cases, however, the growing amount of material we have from non-Pāli sources can sometimes be used, if we exercise great care, to support one Pāli reading against another. The relationship between Pāli and non-Pāli versions of one and the same text, or phrase, or individual word, does nevertheless raise problems, since it is not at all obvious why a reading in a Sanskrit or Prakrit manuscript from Chinese Turkestan should sometimes be closer to a reading in a Pāli manuscript from Burma or Thailand than to a reading in a Sinhalese manuscript, e.g. the

4. J. Brough, *The Gāndhārī Dharmapada*, Oxford, 1962,197.

5. *Udānavarga*, edited by F. Bernhard, XXXII, 64 foll.

Udānavarga[6] has *kṛntana* in the verse which is parallel to *Dhammapada 275*, where the Sinhalese edition has *santhana*, but the Burmese edition has *kantana*. On the other hand, the Sanskrit version of the *Upāli-sūtra* has *aprabhītasya* where the Sinhalese and Burmese editions of the *Majjhima-nikāya*[7] have *appahīnassa*, but the Siamese version has *appabhītassa*.[8] Much research needs to be carried out into the interrelationship between the various Buddhist countries and their manuscript traditions to try to find out the extent to which they depended upon one another in the past, in an attempt to work out how far their manuscript traditions are independent. It is clear that in very recent years the tradition in Thailand has been greatly influenced by Burmese and European editions, but research carried out in libraries in Thailand[9] is uncovering manuscripts which seem to be older than anything we have available from Ceylon and Burma, and some of the readings found in such manuscripts differ from those found in the present Thai editions, and give support for alternative readings which are in many ways superior to those of our present editions. These manuscripts certainly pre-date the Burmese Fifth and Sixth Councils, and in content, if not in actual physical nature, perhaps go back to the Siamese council held in 1475-77.

If non-Pāli sources can be used to help us in our research in Pāli philology, then the reverse is also the case. This has, of course, been recognized by those editing Sanskrit manuscripts from Turfan and Gilgit, and it is common practice to print the Pāli version, where it exists, alongside such a Sanskrit text. This has proved very useful as a means of correcting errors or conjecturing ways of filling up lacunae in manuscripts, or placing fragments in order, etc. The next stage of such an investigation, however, is to go further than this, and to compare the Pāli and non-Pāli versions, and to try to deduce, if not the form of the original text, at least that of an earlier version, from which they have both been translated.

Such a need arises immediately we come across words which clearly refer to the same thing, but have different forms, which cannot easily be explained by the normal dialect variations, e.g. Sanskrit *pratisaṃvid, avadāna, ekavīcika, anupadhiśeṣa* and *saṅghāvaśeṣa*, where the Pāli forms are *paṭisaṃbhidā, apadāna, ekabījin, anupādisesa* and *saṅghādisesa*. If we wish to make use of etymology as a means of finding out the precise meanings of these technical terms, then the fact that the relationship between them is obscure makes our task more difficult. There are also difficulties when we come across words which are possibly ambiguous. It is well-known that certain Pāli words have two or more possible etymologies, i.e. two or more Sanskrit words have become homonymous in Middle Indo-Aryan, so that when we meet the Pāli word in our reading we have to decide which of the Sanskrit antecedents we are dealing with. It is very interesting in such contexts to find that sometimes the Sanskrit parallels do not distinguish between the alternatives, but select one or other of them, e.g. Pāli *nekkhamma* can be derived

6. *Udānavarga*, *op. cit.*, XII, 9-10.

7. *Majjhima-nikāya*, I 386, 25*.

8. See O. von Hinüber, "Upāli's verses in the *Majjhimanikāya* and the *Madhyamāgama*", in L.A. Hercus *et al.*, eds., *Indological and Buddhist Studies* (Volume in honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his sixtieth Birthday), Canberra, 1982, 243-51 (see page 244).

9. See O. von Hinüber, "Pāli manuscripts of canonical texts from North Thailand - a preliminary report", *JSS*, 71, 1983, 75-88.

from either Sanskrit *naiṣkramya* or Sanskrit *naiṣkāmya*, but it seems always to be Sanskritised in Buddhist texts as *naiṣkramya*. Reading, therefore, a Buddhist Sanskrit text in which the word *naiṣkramya* appears, we must bear in mind that it may stand for *naiṣkāmya*.

If the original author of a text intended a pun which was possible because the two elements of his pun were homonymous in the dialect of Middle Indo-Aryan in which he was composing his text, then a redactor translating into Sanskrit was faced with a problem when he came to deal with it. If an author intended *dhamma-pīti* to mean both "drinking in the doctrine" and "joy in the doctrine", then a Sanskrit redactor, even if he realized that a pun was intended, which is not at all certain, could not hope to express it in Sanskrit, since he had to make a choice between writing *dharma-pīti* and *dharma-prīti*. He had the same problem with regard to a pun based upon *atta-dīpa*, which could mean either "a lamp for oneself" or "an island, i.e. refuge, for oneself". He had to write either *ātma-dīpa* or *ātma-dvīpa*.

Such examples are well-known, but there are other forms, equally ambiguous, which are perhaps less well known. If we consider the Sanskrit word *bodhisattva*, I do not doubt that many people would translate it as "a being destined for enlightenment", and the same translation is usually given for the Pāli form *bodhisatta*. Monier-Williams, however, translates it more in accordance with the rules of Sanskrit grammar, as "one whose essence is perfect knowledge". This is a very good epithet for a Buddha, but hardly suitable for one who has not yet reached that state, which should make us rather suspicious about the translation of the word. We can, however, point out that the word *bodhisattva* is late in Sanskrit, and probably later than *bodhisatta* in Middle Indo-Aryan. We can therefore postulate that it is a back-formation in Sanskrit. This gives us the opportunity of proposing alternative etymologies, and we can, if we wish, accept the suggestion of the Pāli commentators that it is *bodhi* + *satta* < *sakta*, not *sattva*, i.e. "directed towards enlightenment" or *bodhi* + *satta* < *śakta*, i.e. "capable of enlightenment".[10]

Sometimes Pāli philology can help to suggest a solution to problems in languages other than Pāli. Those of you who have read Nāgārjuna"s *Ratnāvalī* in Tibetan may have noticed that he refers to *nirvāṇa* as "master everywhere"[11], while the Chinese version translates it as 'all pervading.'[12] The epithet is a quotation of a canonical phrase, which appears in the Chinese translation of the *Dīrgha-āgama*[13] of the Dharmaguptakas in the form 'shining of or by itself', although the parallel passage in the Chinese translation of the *Madhyama-āgama*[14] of the Sarvāstivādins of Kāśmīra seems not to include the epithet. The phrase also occurs twice in the

10. See W.B.Bollée, "Buddhists and Buddhism in the earlier literature of the Śvetāmbara Jains", in L. Cousins *et al.*, eds., *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner*, Dordrecht 1974, 27-39 (p. 36, n. 2).

11. *kun-tu bdag-po*. See *Ratnāvalī*, I, 93-95. Cf. *Yuktiṣaṣṭika*, 34.

12. T, XXXII, 495b, 1.15.

13. T, I, 102c, 1.17.

14. T, I, 548b, 1.11.

Theravādin canon, in the *Dīgha-nikāya*[15] and the *Majjhima-nikāya*,[16] and most editions read *sabbatopabha*,[17] which would appear to support the reading in the *Dīrgha-āgama*. Why, then, should Nāgārjuna, or at least his translators, translate differently?

When, however, we come to investigate, we find that the Pāli situation is not as simple as might appear. The commentator Buddhaghosa wrote commentaries upon both the *Dīgha-* and the *Majjhima-nikāya*. In the commentary on the latter he gives three explanations for *sabbato-pabha:* 'shining', 'abundant, having power'. and 'ford'. The sub-commentary upon his commentary refers only to the first of these. In his commentary upon the *Dīgha-nikāya* Buddhaghosa gives only the explanation as 'ford', basing it upon the sound change *-p- > -bh-*. The sub-commentary gives the explanation 'ford', but also alludes to the idea of 'shining'. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the Pāli grammarian Aggavaṃsa refers in one place in his grammar to *sabbato-pabha* as an epithet of *nibbāna*, but in another place refers to *sabbato-papha* as an example of the sound change *-p- > -ph-*.[18] It would seem likely that this is the sound change to which Buddhaghosa was referring, and we must therefore assume that there has been an error in the manuscript tradition for this word - an assumption which is borne out when we note the variation in readings in the various editions.

The most probable explanation for all this confusion is that in a version earlier than any of those available to us today the epithet had the form *sabbato-paha* or *sabbato-pahu*, i.e. it was composed in, or had been transmitted through, a dialect where aspirated stops developed to *-h-*, and where the nominative singular of short *-a* stems could be in *-o* or *-u*. Those translating into Pāli or Sanskrit were, therefore, faced with the problem of deciding how to represent the word in their own language or dialect, and how to explain it. The Pāli tradition came up with three solutions: to change *-paha* to *-papha*, to change *-paha* to *-pabha*, or to change *-pahu* to *-pabhu*. The first was explained as *-papa* 'ford', with the change of *-p- > -pha-*; the second as *-pabha* 'shining', and the third as *-pabhūta* 'abundant, having power'. Not all of these are attested in the canonical texts as we have them, but the commentarial traditions retained them in their exegesis.

Other traditions, at least those which are available to us now, seem not to have approved of, or perhaps thought of, the idea of *-papha* 'ford'. It is not clear what the reading was in the Sanskrit or (Prakritized Sanskrit) versions underlying the Chinese *āgamas*. The version available to the *Dīrgha-āgama* redactor was clearly capable of interpretation as *-prabha*, which accounts for the translation found there. It seems likely that the version available to the *Madhyama-āgama* redactor was not capable of such an interpretation or it would surely have been translated in the same way as in the *Dīrgha-āgama*. Whatever it was, it seems to have been beyond the redactor's ability to translate, which probably accounts for his omitting it. The

15. I, 223, 12.

16. I, 329, 31.

17. The Pali Text Society editions of the *Dīgha-nikāya* and its commentary both read *-paha*, but this seems to be due to the confusion of *ha* and *bha* in the Sinhalese script.

18. *Saddanīti* 70, 20 and 622, 21.

version available to Nāgārjuna either contained the word *-pabhu*, or was capable of being so interpreted, which accounts for his including this form of the epithet in his *Ratnāvalī*.

I am not a scholar of Buddhism, and I must confess that I do not have any great interest in the subject, and know little or nothing about it. I would, however, describe myself as a scholar of Pāli, even if I discover each year that I know less and less about the subject, and increasingly find that I accept less and less of whatever I thought I understood years ago. I regard my part in the connection between Pāli philology and Buddhist studies as being that of a consultant, and over the years I have had an extensive correspondence with those who wish to know whether the suggestions and proposals which they wish to make about Buddhism, based upon Pāli sources, are tenable and viable. To such enquiries I have occasionally had to say that, relying on the knowledge which I have of the subject, their suggestions are impossible or, rather, very unlikely (it is hard to be certain that anything is impossible in the field of Middle Indo-Aryan studies). Sometimes I can emphatically support the suggestion, and even give additional evidence. Most of the time, however, I can say little more than "Maybe", which is sufficient for them, they believe, to go ahead.

To return to the point which I tried to make at the beginning of this paper, it must be said that the Pali Text Society is well aware of the deficiencies of many of its editions, and, inevitably, of the translations based upon them. The problem is to know what to do about it. Faulty editions do not correct themselves by mere wishful thinking, and there is a desperate shortage of those who are both qualified to make satisfactory editions of Pāli texts and also willing to correct earlier editors' work rather than make an edition of some newly discovered work which they hope will have an earthshaking effect upon the world of Pāli and Buddhist studies when it appears. Quite often the amount of correction required in old editions is so great that a new edition, rather than a corrected edition is required. When money is short, or workers lacking, then the Pali Text Society's general editor has himself, on occasion, made all the corrections that can be done by adding or removing diacritical marks and punctuation marks, with ink and whitener respectively. I have personally spent many hours in this way, preparing works for reprinting. When the Society decided to print the text so arbitrarily deprived of hyphens by the Founder's widow, it fell to my lot to put them all back in by hand, since it would have cost a large sum of money, inevitably reflected in the selling price of the book, if a printer had done it. Sometimes one's plans are upset by well-meaning people. I once spent many hours correcting a copy of a particular work for reprinting, only to find when I received a copy of the reprint that an over-zealous sub-editor, appalled at the number of handwritten corrections in the copy sent him for photographing, had searched high and low to get a 'clean', i.e. uncorrected, copy which he proceeded to send to the printers in place of the copy upon which I had worked so hard.

If the situation is to be improved, then action must be taken to increase the number of philologists working in the field of Buddhist studies. It is perhaps going too far to say that there is no shortage of those wishing to work in the field of

Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism, but certainly there are recruits coming forward in those fields. As I have, however, tried to make clear, Chinese and Tibetan, by themselves, are not sufficient for those who wish to specialized in Hīnayāna Buddhism. Sanskrit is clearly essential, and so too is competence in Middle Indo-Aryan, by which I meant not just Pāli but the whole range of the dialects coming under that heading, including those used by the Jains for their canonical and commentarial texts. As I have emphasized, the texts which we have in Pāli, no less than the Hīnayāna canonical texts which we have in Sanskrit, are translations from other dialects of Middle Indo-Aryan, and to understand how Pāli and Sanskrit texts came to be in the form in which we have them today we have to know as much as we can about those other dialects. Unless we can attract recruits to the field of Middle Indo-Aryan studies, then the supply of those with the necessary knowledge will dry up, and articles and books about Buddhism will continue to be written by those who cannot handle the language themselves and will consequently, of necessity, be dependent upon the unsatisfactory texts and translations which, with a few notable exceptions, we have at the moment.

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The Origins of Insight Meditation

Lance Cousins

It is easy to get the impression from reading the literature that the principal form of meditation current today in Theravāda Buddhism is a particular type of insight meditation (*vipassanā*)—one which is keenly recommended by adherents. Meditation practice of this kind has in relatively recent years spread from Burma to other Southern Buddhist countries and even outside the traditional environment of this form of Buddhism. Today centres and teachers for the practice of insight meditation are to be found in England, Germany, India, U.S.A., and many other countries. Almost all of these derive ultimately from Burma, although they are not all of the same branch of Burmese meditation. This method is advocated with great, if not excessive, enthusiasm—perhaps a single quotation (from the well-known German monk Ñāṇaponika Mahāthera) will suffice:[1]

> "This ancient Way of Mindfulness is as practicable today as it was 2,500 years ago. It is as applicable in the lands of the West as in the East; in the midst of life's turmoil as well as in the peace of the monk's cell.
>
> Right Mindfulness is, in fact, the indispensable basis of Right Living and Right Thinking—everywhere, at any time, for everyone."

In this article I look first at the present-day practice of this type of meditation and its competitors, then touch briefly on the historical roots of these schools in recent centuries so far as they are known, afterwards turning to the specific features of this kind of *bhāvanā* and to the literary sources of this approach, as they are given in the Theravādin commentarial literature of the first millennium A.D. Looking then to the sources of the commentaries themselves, I find the principal origin of this type of material in a later canonical work, the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* and seek to situate its historical context in the period of the formation of the Vibhajjavādin and Sarvāstivādin schools. Finally I look briefly at the earlier origins of the wisdom tradition in Buddhism and comment on the

1. Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, third ed., London, 1962 [1953], 7.

work of those scholars who consider it to be a later development, posterior to the time of the Buddha himself.

Schools of meditation practice today

Leaving aside forms of Buddhist meditation which have their roots in Northern or Eastern Buddhism, almost all commercially published accounts of meditation by Buddhist (and non-Buddhist) practitioners are derived from some branch of Burmese insight meditation, and usually from one of two branches of that.[2] Most other writing is either based on that or on the fifth century *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa or on a mixture of the two.[3] Even Kornfield's *Living Buddhist*

2. Some examples are: M. Byles, *Journey into Burmese Silence*, London, 1962; J.E. Coleman, *The Quiet Mind*, New York, 1971; V.R. (Sobhana Dhammasudhi) Dhiravamsa, *The Real Way to Awakening*, London, 1969; V.R. (Vichitr Tissadatto) Dhiravamsa, *Insight Meditation*, London, 2508; V.R. Dhiravamsa, *The Dynamic Way of Meditation, The Release and Cure of Pain and Suffering through Vipassanā Meditative Techniques*, Wellingborough, Northants, 1982; V.R. Dhiravamsa, *The Way of Non-attachment*, Wellingborough, Northants, 1975; V.R. Dhiravamsa, *The Middle Path of Life, Being Talks on the Practice of Insight Meditation*, London, 1974; V.R. Dhiravamsa, *A New Approach to Buddhism*, London, 1972; J. Goldstein, *The Experience of Insight: A Simple and Direct Guide to Buddhist Meditation*, 2nd ? ed., New York, 1983 [1976]; J. Goldstein & J Kornfield, *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom, The Path of Insight Meditation*, Boston & London, 1987; Henepola Gunaratana, Mahāthera, *Mindfulness in Plain English*, reprinted ed., Taipei, 1991; J. Hamilton-Merritt, *A Meditator's Diary, A Western Woman's Unique Experiences in Thailand Monasteries*, 1979 [1976]; A. & J. James, *A Meditation Retreat*, Box, Wiltshire, 1986; A. & J. James, *Modern Buddhism*, Box, Wiltshire, 1987; A. James, *The Unfolding of Wisdom, The Buddha's Path to Enlightenment*, Bradford on Avon, 1993; Chua Jantrupon, *Vipassanā Bhāvanā (Theory, Practice and Result)*, 2nd ed., tr. by F. Tullius, Chonburi, 1988; W.L. King, *A Thousand Lives Away*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965; Mahāsi, Sayadaw, *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā*, Bangkok, 1975; Achan Sobin S. Namto, *Moment to Moment Mindfulness, A Pictorial Manual for Meditators*, Fawnskin, California, 1989; Thich Nhāt Han, *The Miracle of Mindfulness, A Manual on Meditation*, rev. ed., tr. by Mobi Ho, Boston, 1987; Thich Nhāt Han, *The Sun My Heart: From Mindfulness to Insight Contemplation*, Berkeley, Calif., c. 1988; E.H. Shattock, *An Experiment in Mindfulness*, London, 1958 [1958]; D.K. Swearer, *Secrets of the Lotus, An Introduction to Buddhist Meditation—Contemporary Classical Interpretations of the Zen and Theravāda Traditions*, New York & London, 1971; J. Walters, *Mind Unshaken*, London, 1961. Other accounts include: G.D. Bond, "The Insight Meditation Movement in Contemporary Theravada Buddhism," *JISRC*, 2.4, 1987, 23–76; R. Gombrich, "From Monastery to Meditation Centre: Lay Meditation in Modern Sri Lanka," in *Buddhist Studies — Ancient and Modern*, eds., P. Denwood and T. Piatigorsky, 20–34, London, 1983; J. Maquet, "Expressive Space and Theravada Values: A Meditation Monastery in Sri Lanka," *Ethos*, 3.1, 1975, 1–23; J. Maquet, "Meditation in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Idea and Practice," *JTP*, 7.2, 1975, 182–96.

3. To mention some of the more influential—largely based on the *Visuddhimagga* are: Edward Conze, *Buddhist Meditation*, London, 1956; Paravahera Vajirañāṇa, Mahāthera, *Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice, A General Exposition According to the Pāli Canon of the Theravāda School*, Colombo, 1962; partly based

77/3

Masters[4] is heavily and misleadingly biased towards the insight meditation tradition in its selection, although this book does give some coverage of Thai approaches and its final chapter provides a good overview. Of course there is a considerable body of pamphlet literature, distributed by individual monasteries and meditation centres. This is much more varied, but many such works are difficult to obtain except by personal visits.

Before pursuing the history of this tradition it is perhaps useful to look briefly at the other kinds of meditation current at the present time. In Sri Lanka today, there are a number of forest centres which do not practise exclusively insight meditation, although there are certainly influences there from Burma. Most of these probably come from an earlier stage in the development of the Burmese insight tradition. In particular some of these centres teach *kasiṇabhāvanā* i.e. meditation on colours and the qualities of the four elements.[5] It is possible, however, that this tradition is a relatively recent development, partly based upon the texts. Widespread among individual monks are two practices: the development of loving-kindness (to oneself and usually to all sentient beings) and mindfulness of in-and-out breathing.[6] The first of these is strictly a form of *samatha* or calm meditation, although it is not unusual for it to be practised in conjunction with insight meditation or as a balancing adjunct to other methods. Equally it may be (and often is) adopted as the main form of meditation. As to the second, many different techniques for working with the breath are in fact current, but breathing mindfulness differs crucially from the other methods in that it can be used to develop insight or calm or both together. All these kinds of practice, as found in the island today, seem to be partly individual creations from the literature and partly something transmitted through the network of individual connections within the Buddhist *saṅgha*. It is of course impossible to assess how old the meditative traditions of that network may be, but it certainly includes ideas and practices coming from both Burma and Indo-China.

on experience of insight meditation and partly on the *Visuddhimagga* are: G.D. Bond, *The Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka, Religious Tradition, Reinterpretation and Response*, Columbia, S.C., 1988; W.L. King, *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga*, University Park & London, 1980; Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, third ed., London, 1962 [1953]. The principal exceptions (among larger works) to this rule are: Bhikkhu Khantipalo, *Calm and Insight, A Buddhist Manual for Meditators*, London, 1981; Phra Mahā Singhathon Narāsabho, *Buddhism, A Guide to a Happy Life*, Bangkok, 1971. Hammalawa Saddhātissa, *The Buddha's Way*, London & New York, 1971/1972 is also rather more wide-ranging than most in its sources.

4. J. Kornfield, *Living Buddhist Masters*, Santa Cruz, 1977.

5. I have twice stayed for a few weeks at one such centre (Kalugala). Others are described in M.B. Carrithers, *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka: An Anthropological and Historical Study*, Delhi, 1983.

6. This statement is based upon personal observation.

78/3

In Burma many schools of insight meditation are current, but in addition to that there is a great deal of concentration-orientated meditation.[7] Most of the latter seems to be associated either with esotericism of some kind or with the development of psychic powers and is often especially linked to developing mental contact with some kind of non-human being.[8] This kind of thing is found in Thailand, but what is also found there is a tradition (or rather a number of traditions) which seek to develop concentration to a high level as the basis for the subsequent achievement of insight and the higher levels of the Buddhist path. I shall contrast this approach as calm meditation, although it should be noted that there are Burmese insight schools which place more emphasis on concentration than others, while there are Thai schools which introduce the insight aspect at a somewhat earlier stage than others. (I shall exclude from consideration here Thai schools of insight meditation as these seem to have been introduced from Burma either in the post-war period or earlier in the twentieth century.)

Among the Thai schools the most well-known to European practitioners is certainly the *samādhi* tradition of North-East Thailand. This approach, also referred to as the Forest Tradition, is particularly, but not exclusively, current in the Thammayut *nikāya*. It often involves the attempt to develop some degree of *samādhi* but does bring in some insight at an early stage. It can also be characterized by its use of meditation on the thirty two parts of the body and by use of the *mantra Buddho* together with mindfulness of breathing. This tradition is both conservative and reformist but not usually modernist or ultimatist.[9] It can

7. G. Houtman writes: "Today at least two dozen distinct nationally renowned insight methodologies operate many hundreds of centres, in which many thousands of independent teachers teach, and to which hundreds of thousands of independent practitioners commit themselves for temporary retreats." (Draft Introduction to Gustaaf Houtman, *Contemplating Insight*, forthcoming, page 5). No doubt there are more which operate only in small groups or even on a one-to-one basis with a single teacher.
8. G. Houtman, "Traditions of Buddhist Practice in Burma," Ph.D, SOAS, University of London, 1990.
9. It should be noted, however, that it has its roots in the Thammayut reform of King Mongkut (king 1851–1868, but ordained as a monk from 1824), a reform which was certainly actively modernist in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. For the reform of King Mongkut and the Forest Tradition, see: F. Bizot, *Le Bouddhisme des Thaïs*, Bangkok, 1993, chapter 3; S.J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer, A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*, Cambridge, 1976; S.J. Tambiah, *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets, A Study in Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism and Millennial Buddhism*, Cambridge, 1984, chapters 6 and 9–11; J.L. Taylor, *Forest Monks and the Nation-State, An Anthropological and Historical Study in Northeastern Thailand*, Singapore, 1993. Many pamphlets for free distribution from this tradition circulate. See Kornfield, *op. cit.*, chapters 9 (and 4). English versions of

be contrasted with the highly modernist approach of the followers of Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu with their distinct tendency towards ultimatism.[10] A more traditionalist approach is that of Wat Paknam involving concentration on various centres in the body, particularly one just above the navel, and the *mantra sammā araham*.[11] An offshoot of this is the Dhammakāya movement with the same kind of meditation practice, but with a strongly modernizing tendency.[12] Here however the modernization lies rather in presentation than in ideas; so it is perhaps better characterized as revivalist. It is sometimes referred to as fundamentalist, but this is rather misleading.

The last two of these must have their roots in the kind of Southern Buddhist esotericism so ably described in the writings of François Bizot.[13] In fact Bizot

via anonymous FTP from the node sunsite.unc.edu in the sub-directory /pub/academic/religious studies/Buddhism/DEPA/ Theravada.

10. By 'ultimatist' I mean the perennial tendency within most forms of Buddhism to emphasize the highest levels of wisdom or enlightenment and discard more elementary levels. For a full bibliography on Buddhadāsa, see: Louis Gabaude, *Une herméneutique bouddhique contemporaine de Thaïlande: Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu*, Paris, 1988; *cf.* also Peter A. Jackson, *Buddhadasa: a Buddhist Thinker for the Modern World*, Bangkok, 1988 and Buddhadāsa, Bhikkhu, *Toward the Truth*, Philadelphia, Pa., 1971.
11. A visitor's account from 1954 in Richard Randall, *Life as a Siamese Monk*, Bradford on Avon, 1990. Some English pamphlets: T. Magness, *Sammā Samādhi, Being an Exposition of the Method of Samatha-vipassanā as Discovered and Attained by All Buddhas*, Bangkok, c. 1960; T. Magness, *Sammā Samādhi (Part Two), Being an Exposition of Attainments Derived From Samatha-vipassanā*, Bangkok, c. 1961; T. Magness, *The Life and Teachings of the Ven. Chao Khun Mongkol-thepmuni*, Bangkok, c. 1970 ?; Phra Wai Cattālayo, *Brightness of Dhamma*, Bangkok, 1986; The Venerable Pra (*sic*) Bhavana-kosolthera, (Veera Ganuttamo), *Basic Meditation Practice by Vijja Dhammakaya Approach*, Bangkok, 1984.
12. Ven. Mettānando, Bhikkhu, "The Dhammakāya Movement—An Aspect from Within," in *IABS Tenth International Conference in Paris*, edited by Ananda W.P. Guruge, 35–36, 1991(a much shortened version of the conference paper). Various English language pamphlets are available from Wat Dhammakāya.
13. F. Bizot, *Le Figuier à Cinq Branches, Recherche sur le bouddhisme khmer*, Paris, 1976; F. Bizot, "La Grotte de la Naissance. Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer, II," *BEFEO*, LXVII, 1980, 221–273; F. Bizot, *Le Don de Soi-même, Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer III*, Paris, 1981; F. Bizot, "Notes sur les *yantra* bouddhiques d'Indochine," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in honour of R.A. Stein*, ed., M. Strickmann, Vol. I, 155–191, Brussels, 1981; F. Bizot, *Les traditions de la pabbajjā en Asie du Sud-Est, Recherches sur le bouddhisme khmer, IV*, Göttingen, 1988; F. Bizot, *Rāmaker, L'Amour symbolique de Rām et Sītā, Recherches sur le bouddhisme Khmer, V*, Paris, 1989; F. Bizot, "La consécration des statues et le culte des morts," in *Recherches nouvelles sur le Cambodge*, ed., F Bizot, Paris, 1994, 101–39; F. Bizot, *Le bouddhisme des Thaïs*, Bangkok, 1993; F. Bizot and O. von Hinüber, *La guirlande de Joyaux*, Paris, 1994 and see also: O. de Bernon and F. Bizot, *Le Rāmaker du vieux Chak*, Paris, 1995: Catherine Becchetti *Le*

has described a number of types of meditation practice of a loosely tantric kind which he has met with in Cambodia (and Northern Thailand ?). Some at least of these traditions have clearly survived the period of Communist rule.[14] It seems that they have had some currency at a popular level through most of mainland South-East Asia, but tend to be disliked in the higher levels of the hierarchy and by some of the western-educated upper classes.[15]

Historical roots

There has been some discussion among scholars as to exactly how old the meditation tradition is. In fact we should distinguish carefully here what we mean by meditation and who exactly we are referring to. First of all it is necessary to distinguish between monks and lay people. It is often claimed that meditation among lay people in Ceylon is a relatively new phenomenon of the post-war period. Certainly a middle class movement, attending meditation centres catering for the laity is indeed a recent development. Relatively few village people seem to take up meditation before they reach a more advanced age. It may however be a mistake to assume that this is merely formalistic or ineffective.

In South-East Asia lay practice in youth is again claimed to be a recent phenomenon, although certainly considerably older than in Ceylon. I have doubts about this, however, as the strong tradition of spending a period in the *saṅgha* must have led to a certain number of individuals continuing to meditate after disrobing. Of course, there is no doubt that the majority of meditators would have been monks before relatively recent times. In any case lay meditation seems to have been a normative part of the various forms of esotericism.

For monks, it is clear that there has always been some tradition of meditation, at least in South-East Asia. In Ceylon it is usually held that relatively few monks meditate. This seems to me to be a slight overstatement of the case. Nevertheless for Ceylon the impression one has is that the meditation tradition was largely moribund at some point in the past and has been in part reintroduced from elsewhere. The same claim that few monks meditate is also made for Burma and Thailand. Here I find it flatly unbelievable. My own experience is that meditation is widely practised and well-known, although certainly not universal. The claim is based upon anthropological data which I find partially suspect. Sometimes one feels that it is a bit like sending a questionnaire to vicars asking

Cambodge," in *Recherches nouvelles sur le Cambodge*, ed., F Bizot, Paris, 1994, 47–62.

14. F. Bizot, *Le Chemin de Laṅkā*, Paris, 1992, 72.

15. On this tradition, see L.S. Cousins, "Esoteric Southern Buddhism," in title to be announced, ed., Susan Hamilton, 1996.

them if they are mystics—probably even those with a considerable spiritual experience and commitment would be likely to answer 'no'. In fact a much more sophisticated sociological analysis than is usually undertaken seems required, taking into account such things as regional differences, what is meant by meditation and the overall pattern of the different stages of a monk's life.

Above all, it is essential to attempt to ask questions in terms which are actually meaningful to the meditation tradition. This is where what we actually mean by 'meditation' becomes crucial. In general English usage of the word 'meditation' seems to refer to methods or techniques of repetitive exercise for developing some kind of mental state or understanding. This is very far from covering the full range of meaning of Buddhist *bhāvanā*. Indeed this term refers very precisely to the bringing into being of the *bodhipakkhiyadhammas* in general or the eightfold path in particular. In other words, such monastic activities as studying or teaching the *dhamma* as well as chanting *suttas* or repetition of *gāthā* may equally be forms of *bhāvanā*. This is certainly the position of the *aṭṭhakathā* and was probably that of traditional Theravāda Buddhism. Many *samatha* meditators today would still have some such understanding. In this view of the matter, *bhāvanā* is very widely practised indeed, both by virtually all monks and by most of the more committed laity.

While such a view of 'meditation' is indeed still widely held, it is precisely not the position which is frequent in some schools of insight meditation. For them, such activities as chanting and repetition of traditional formulæ are either not meditation at all or only an inferior form of meditation and that only when they are in a very orthodox form. Note then that for such monks or lay followers there is relatively little meditation in present-day Buddhism—by definition.

Such a position can be a product of reformism, the frequently recurring tendency in the history of Theravāda Buddhism to seek to restore Buddhism in general and the *saṅgha* in particular to an idealized state conceived of as their original and proper condition. Reformist movements have in fact recurred fairly frequently throughout the last thousand years of Southern Buddhist history, if not longer. However, there is little evidence to suggest that in the past this was associated with insight meditation. In some cases at least, it was much more concerned with monastic practice and traditional scholarship. On the whole it seems that it is not possible, at present, to trace the lineage of the present-day insight meditation tradition beyond the nineteenth century (in Burma).

Ironically, the only form of meditation whose lineage appears to be provably older than this is the esoteric tradition. One branch of this tradition was certainly introduced into Ceylon by monks sent by the King of Siam in the eighteenth century. The practice of this method appears to have died out on the island in the course of the nineteenth century, but, as mentioned above, it is still extant in

80/3

Cambodia. It must in the past have been more widespread and is in any case clearly affiliated to some methods still surviving in Thailand. Indeed it is likely that there must have been an ongoing tradition of practice of a number of methods of *samatha* meditation.

In contrast the practice of insight meditation as a separate method is probably a revival based at least in part upon the texts. (Of course, it must always have existed as an adjunct to *samatha* meditation and as a practice for advanced *samatha* meditators.) We can in fact be more precise than that. Its primary source is the commentarial writings of Buddhaghosa, particularly the *Visuddhimagga*. Undoubtedly, some of the monks who have been influential teachers of *vipassanā* in Burma were very learned in *abhidhamma*, but, as we shall see, this is not the main basis for their presentation of insight meditation. (I do not mean to suggest that they did not draw on their knowledge of canonical Buddhism. Indeed, they certainly did. The point is that their presentation is structured on the *Visuddhimagga* model.)

Characteristic features of insight meditation

In order to delineate the main features of insight meditation today, I shall take as my paradigm the school of Mahāsi Sayadaw. This is perhaps the most influential single school at the present time and, more importantly, is probably one of the more extreme in its advocacy of insight and distrust of concentration.[16] (This is particularly the case in conversation with adherents of this approach; in some of his writings the Mahāsi himself seems to take a more moderate position.) The most distinctive element in the practice of this school is undoubtedly its technique of watching the rise and fall of the abdomen, but I shall pass over this as it seems to be an innovation of the Mahāsi himself.

The method of practice of this school is highly intensive, involving the maintenance of mindfulness and clear comprehension over long periods of time, ideally with very little sleep—eighteen to twenty hours of continuous meditation is normative. Usually sitting meditation and walking practice are alternated. The walking practice involves the systematic breeking down into named stages of the process of movement. Initially, each of these stages is noted mentally and at the same time all external distractions or internal wanderings of the mind are similarly noted. It is in fact recommended that the walking practice (and any other necessary activities) should be carried out as slowly as possible.[17] This slowing down is sometimes criticized by devotees of other schools of insight[18]

16. Outside Burma (but not within) the tradition of U Ba Khin is very nearly as influential, but this school is much more moderate in its approach.

17. Mahāsi, Sayadaw, *Satipaṭṭhāna Vipassanā*, Bangkok, 1975, 22: "It is therefore instructed that slow motion exercises be carried out at all times."

18. e.g. by the disciples of the well-known Thai female teacher, Acharn Naeb.

and does not in fact seem to be clearly authorized in the texts, although the differentiation of movement into stages is found.

As with most other schools of insight meditation the stages of the path are mapped out in accordance with the seven purifications and the various kinds of insight knowledge. On the whole the *Visuddhimagga* account is followed fairly closely with a few variations (usually justified by reference to other texts). I shall not give a detailed account of this, as I have outlined Buddhaghosa's description elsewhere.[19] The most important features for present purposes are set out in Table One. The third and fourth columns set out (in ascending order) the seven purifications (*visuddhi*) which form the structure of the *Visuddhimagga*. The first two columns give the corresponding insight knowledges which occur in each stage of purification.

The point at which controversy has sometimes arisen in relation to Mahāsi Sayadaw's approach lies in relation to the second purification: *cittavisuddhi*, always understood as equivalent to concentration (*samādhi*). For the Mahāsi, all that is required to practise insight meditation is the weakest of the three degrees of concentration, i.e. *khaṇikasamādhi* or momentary concentration. Of course, if this means that this degree of concentration is all that is required to *start* meditation, then it is not controversial and in fact applies to any kind of meditation. However, Mahāsi Sayadaw seems to mean more than this. Again, it is often stated that the various insight knowledges are experienced in momentary concentration. This seems to follow from the fact that they do not have a *paṭibhāganimitta* or non-sensory mental object, as the two higher kinds of concentration do. By elimination therefore they must be developed with momentary concentration.

There are two problems with this. The first is historical. Buddhaghosa uses the term *khaṇikasamādhi* only rather rarely. The list of the three kinds of concentration (momentary, access and absorption) occurs in a passage which explains how the five kinds of *pīti* (energization/joy), when they are conceived and mature, bring about the tranquillization of mind and body. When that matures, it brings about bodily and mental happiness. When that in turn matures,

19. L.S. Cousins, "The Stages of Christian Mysticism and Buddhist Purification: the Interior Castle of St. Teresa of Avila and the Path of Purification of Buddhaghosa," in *The Yogi and the Mystic—Studies in Indian and Comparative Mysticism*, ed., K. Werner, London, 1989, 103–120.

avasiṭṭhakilesa-paccavekkhaṇa	recollection of remaining defilements		
pahīnakilesa-paccavekkhaṇa	recollection of defilements abandoned		
sotāpatti, etc.	stream-entry, etc.	*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*	purification by knowing and seeing
gotrabhu	lineage		
anuloma	inflow		
saṅkhārupekkhā	equipoise as to constructions		
paṭisaṅkhānupassanā	deep analysis	*paṭipadāñāṇa-dassanavisuddhi*	purification by knowing and seeing the path
muñcitukamyatā	desire to be free		
nibbidānupassanā	distaste	*(balavavipassanā)*	(strong insight)
ādīnavānupassanā	wretchedness		
bhayatupaṭṭhāna	establishing the sense of danger		
bhaṅgānupassanā	breaking up		
udayabbayadassana	seeing rise and dissolution	*maggāmaggañāṇa-dassanavisuddhi*	purification by knowing and seeing true and false ways
kalāpasammasana	laying hold in groups	*(taruṇa-vipassanā)*	(young insight)
paccayapariggaha = *(cullasotāpanna)*	comprehending conditions (lesser stream-enterer)	*kaṅkhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi*	purification by crossing through doubt
nāmarūpavavatthāna *(saṅkhāraparicccheda)*	determining name and form (defining constructions)	*diṭṭhivisuddhi*	purification of view
		cittavisuddhi	purification of mind
		sīlavisuddhi	purification of precept

Table One

81/3

it brings about the three kinds of concentration.[20] It is not entirely clear what Buddhaghosa (as opposed to later interpreters) means by that. The only other passage in which Buddhaghosa refers to momentary concentration is in the *Saṃyutta Commentary*.[21] Here *ekodibhūta* is explained as concentrated with momentary concentration, while *ekagga-citta* is understood to refer to access and absorption. The *ṭīkā* understands momentary concentration in this passage as referring to the concentration of the prior stage which brings access *jhāna*. In other words it would seem to be simply the momentary occurrence of access concentration, rather than a different level of concentration as such. Buddhaghosa also uses a somewhat similar term: *khaṇikacitt(ass') ekaggatā* — momentary one-pointedness of mind.[22] This is used to explain how someone practising breathing mindfulness emerges from *jhāna* and contemplates the mind associated with *jhāna* as subject to destruction and liable to disappear. As he is doing so, at a moment of insight momentary one-pointedness of mind arises as a result of penetrating the (three) characteristics (of impermanence, etc.). Subsequently he fixes the mind on the object by means of this momentary one-pointedness of mind. This seems to imply that the term momentary concentration would be applied by Buddhaghosa to the earlier stages of insight.

20. Vism, 144. Virtually the same passage is given in the *Abhidhamma Commentary* at Dhs-a, 117. This reference in Dhs-a is likely to be the source of the passage in the *Visuddhimagga* or else both are drawing from an earlier *Abhidhamma* commentary. The Dhs-a adds that only the kinds of *pīti* which produce the first two kinds of concentration apply i.e. in commenting on skilful, sense-sphere consciousness. Upasena and Mahānāma also give this passage (Nidd-a , I, 129; Paṭis-a, I, 183), but it is noteworthy that Dhammapāla does not. Indeed, Dhammapāla uses the term only once in his commentaries (at Th-a, III, 208) and Buddhadatta apparently never uses it. It is possible that there is a difference here between the Indian and the Sinhalese Pali commentators.

21. Spk, III, 200. Spk-pṭ, II (Be, 252l) 469: *Paṭipakkha-dhammehi anabhibhūtatāya eko udeti ti ekodī ti laddha-nāmo samādhi-bhūto jāto etesan ti ekodibhūtā. Ettha ca ekodibhūtā ti etenā upacāra-jjhānāvahā pubba-bhāgiko samādhi vutto; samāhitā ti eteṇa upacār'-appanā-samādhi. Ekagga-cittā ti etena su-bhāvito vasi-ppatto appanā-samādhi vutto ti veditabbo.*

22. Vism, 289 = Sp, II, 433; cf. Paṭis-a, II, 503. The *Mahāṭīkā* comments: momentary one-pointedness of mind is concentration which lasts for just a moment (at a time); for that fixes the mind unshakably on the object as if in absorption, through occurring continuously in a single manner without being overcome by opposing qualities (*paṭipakkha*) (Vism-mht, [1928] I, 278). Sometimes, Buddhaghosa does refer to: "factors of awakening in insight, which have various qualities and characteristics and last for one moment only"—Ps , IV, 143; Spk, III, 274 (v.l.). Note that in the same place there is mention of concentration which is "as if attained to absorption". There are also two passages referring to momentary attainment of fruition attainment (*khaṇikasamāpatti*): Sv, II, 547 (pṭ: II, 186); Spk, III, 292 f., but this expression is not used elsewhere or by other commentators.

sui generis 82/3

This suggestion gains some support from the use of another term in the earlier commentators. Mahānāma (early sixth century A.D.) in fact distinguishes four kinds of concentration, of which the first two are: momentary concentration and insight concentration (*vipassanāsamādhi*).[23] This latter term is sometimes used by Buddhaghosa,[24] but more often, when referring to the higher stages of insight, he uses either a simple reference to insight or such expressions as signless liberation (*animitto vimokkho*) or signless attainment of mind (*animitta-cetosamāpatti*).[25] The higher knowledges are treated at a much later point in the *Visuddhimagga* and are perhaps considered by Buddhaghosa as something *sui generis*.

Let us note here that these rather few passages, in which momentary concentration is referred to, must stand against numerous references to concentration as having just the two kinds: access (*upacāra*) and absorption (*appanā*).[26] Access concentration is in fact fairly ancient as a concept, with roots in the canonical literature.[27] It is generally characterized in the commentaries in terms of the abandonment of the hindrances and the arising of the abstract or semblance sign (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*). It is possible that momentary concentration is intended to apply to the stage in meditation before this, when an acquired sign (*uggahanimitta*) or eidetic image is the object of the mind (as well as to the parallel stage in insight meditation). However, it is more likely that Buddhaghosa simply means by momentary concentration a stage in which moments of access concentration with a semblance *nimitta* as their object occur in between moments with other objects.

23. Paṭis-a, I, 125. Paṭis-gp, (c. 1962) 86: *Paramatthakkhaṇamattena yutto samādhi khaṇikasamādhi, Ekattavasena vā santānena vā abhāvita-samathass' ev' etaṃ nāmaṃ*; *cf.* also Paṭis-a, I, 130; 281.
24. Spk, II, 303; III, 90; Mp, II, 362; III, 402; IV, 40. Some of Buddhaghosa's references seem to be related to the defilements of insight (*vipassanūpakkilesa*) and others to strong insight. The expression *vipassanā-samādhi* is also used by Dhammapāla: Ud-a, 191; It-a, I, 175; Th-a, II, 270; III, 118; Thī-a to Thī, 144. It is used twice in Vism-mht.
25. For textual references, see Peter Harvey, "'Signless' Meditations in Pāli Buddhism," *JIABS*, 9.1, 1986, 25–52.
26. *e.g.* Vism, 85 ff.; 11; 126; Sp, II, 427 ff.; VII, 1317; Sv, I, 217; Ps, I, 108; 113; II, 83; Spk, I, 27; III, 254; 277; Mp, II, 153; III, 345; V, 67; Vibh -a, 75; 261; 269; 284, etc. Other commentators: Abhidh-av, 93 f.; Nidd-a, I, 131; 133; III, 79; Cp-a, 49; 315; It-a, I, 139; 169; 173; II, 13; Ud-a, 32; 190; 268; 407, etc.
27. The concept, if not the term, is shared with the northern *abhidhamma* schools (and the Northern Buddhist traditions derived from them). In particular, note the ninth *samādhicariyā* of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* (Paṭis, 99), which is rightly interpreted by Ud-a, 196 and Paṭis-a, 316 as referring to access *samādhi*.

This seems also to be the position of the author of the *Mahāṭīkā* to the *Visuddhimagga*.[28] Commenting on Buddhaghosa's use of the term 'preparatory concentration' in his description of the process of developing *deva* hearing (Vism, 408), he makes it clear that momentary concentration is for him a concentration that arises easily after emerging from the preceding (fourth) *jhāna*. He indicates that preparatory concentration has been referred to (by others) as the stage of access to the *deva* hearing element,[29] but suggests that this was said with regard to multiple advertings. Obviously he is correct in regard to the consciousness process, since in this case auditory consciousnesses must be interspersed. The implication for our purposes is that momentary concentration is simply access concentration occurring with sensory consciousnesses interspersed rather than, as normally, in a series of successive mind door processes with the semblance *nimitta* and *jhāna* factors as object.

The second problem is practical. In terms of meditation experience it is quite possible that a lower degree of concentration experienced after attaining a higher one is something quite different to the same degree of concentration when a higher level has not been achieved.

This brings us to the key area of debate. On the authority of the canonical *Rathavinītasutta* (M I 145–151), the seven *visuddhi* are held to be successive stages, referred to as like a relay of chariots. It follows therefore that it is not possible to achieve the insight knowledges of the sixth purification unless the earlier stages have been completed. The particular point of relevance here is the second *visuddhi* which is traditionally defined as either access concentration or full absorption (*appanā*). Indeed Mahāsi Sayadaw himself recognizes in his Pali work *Visuddhi-ñāṇa-kathā*[30] that this is the authoritative definition. However, he argues that here the term 'access concentration' is inclusive of momentary concentration, particularly that degree of momentary concentration which can still the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*). "For otherwise purification of mind would be very hard to arouse for someone whose vehicle is just insight (*suddhavipassanāyānika*) (and) who is experiencing insight without having aroused either access concentration or absorption concentration."[31]

In the Mahāsi's understanding then, momentary concentration is itself something which admits of various degrees. So he speaks of the stage of

28. *Khaṇikasamādhi* is mentioned six times in the *Mahāṭīkā* to the *Visuddhimagga* (Mahidol CDROM). Ñāṇamoli translates five of these (see Vism Trsl. Index s.v. momentary concentration), omitting only that to Vism, 144. See note 22 above.
29. *Parikamma-samādhi nāma dibba-sota-dhātuyā upacārāvatthā ti pi vadanti. Nanu aṭṭhakathāsu upacāra-appanā-samādhinaṃ yeva citta-visuddhi-bhāvo vutto ti ? Saccaṃ ...*
30. Appended to: Mahāsi, Sayadaw, *The Progress of Insight*, Kandy, 1965. See p. 42: *Nanu aṭṭhakathāsu upacāra-appanā-samādhinaṃ yeva citta-visuddhi-bhāvo vutto ti ? Saccaṃ ...*
31. *ibid.*, (my translation, correcting misprints).

purification of mind being accomplished by momentary concentration which is similar in strength to access. Likewise the highest stage of the sixth purification is explained as being accomplished by momentary concentration which has a strength equivalent to that of full absorption. Since it is difficult to imagine how someone could achieve such a degree of momentary concentration without having at some point experienced (at least briefly) access concentration, this is perhaps not really very different to saying that the higher stages require the prior development of access. What it apparently does differ from is the position of a number of Sinhalese scholar monks.[32] They, and others, argue that it is not possible to achieve the stage of the transcendent path (*lokuttaramagga*) without having previously achieved at least the first *jhāna*. Even here, however, if the momentary concentration in strong insight were taken as momentary experiencing of absorption interspersed with insight knowledge, the difference would be rather small in practice.

The canonical texts clearly give considerable importance to *jhāna*. So at first sight it is surprising that there should be a tradition which regards it as unnecessary for some. Even the canonical *abhidhamma* texts make it clear that the transcendent path must be of at least the degree of the first *jhāna*.[33] It is true, however, that they do not in fact specify that *jhāna* is attained beforehand; in principle it could be achieved at the path moment itself. (Equally, they could be assuming that higher *jhānas* have previously been achieved.[34]) The fact remains that this seems an unexpected development and not really what is envisaged in the *suttas*. How then did such a possibility arise?

The literary sources of the vipassanā tradition

If we take the two main features of the insight tradition as, firstly, the acceptance of routes to enlightenment which bypass the development of *jhāna* and, secondly, the mapping of the sequence of insight knowledges, then the immediate source is no doubt the *Visuddhimagga*. In a former article[35] on the distinction between *samathayāna* and *vipassanāyāna*, I have surveyed the main

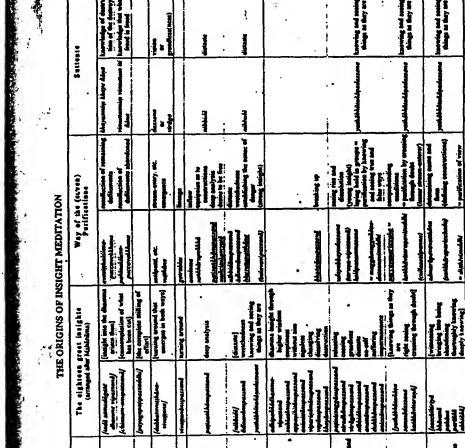
32. Soma Thera, "Contemplation in the Dhamma," in *The Path of Freedom by the Arahant Upatissa*, eds., N.R.M. Ehara *et al.*, Colombo, 1961, 353–362; Khemindа Thera, *Path, Fruit and Nibbāna*, Colombo, 1965. Note that these monks have connections with other Burmese insight schools.

33. *e.g.* Dhs, 60; 69 f.

34. From this interpretation, we should understand *e.g.* Dhs as describing the specific occasion on which the path is developed. This may be of the level of any one of the four *jhānas*, but previous experience of all four may be assumed, at least in the case of the *arahant* or never-returner.

35. L.S. Cousins, "*Samatha-yāna* and *Vipassanā-yāna*," in *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Hammalava Saddhātissa*, eds., G. Dhammapāla *et al.*, 55–68, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka, 1984.

THE ORIGINS OF INSIGHT MEDITATION



84/3

to awakening. It suffices to say here that the possibility of omitting *jhāna* is reasonably well-established in the *aṭṭhakathā* literature. Its ultimate source appears to lie in a particular interpretation of a passage in the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* (II, 92–103).

It is with the second of these features that I am more concerned with here—the insight knowledges. Again, the *locus classicus* is no doubt the *Visuddhimagga*, which describes what later tradition takes to be the sixteen insight knowledges in considerable detail. In the earlier *Vimuttimagga*, which was probably Buddhaghosa's model, most of these (if not all) are present, but in a very abbreviated form.[36] The additional material, as so often in the *Visuddhimagga*, is derived from the *Paṭisambhidā-magga*. This is best set out in tabular form as shown in Table Two.The underlined terms are also found in the list of knowledges in the *Ñāṇakathā* of the *Paṭisambhidāmagga*.

The first two columns of the table list the fourth to the fourteenth kinds of knowledge given in the *mātikā* to the first (and longest) section of the *Paṭisambhidā-magga*, the *Ñāṇakathā*. Since the first three kinds of knowledge are concerned with learning, precepts and concentration, while the fifteenth and those following turn to the objects of insight knowledge, this can be treated as a distinct list of eleven knowledges. In fact, each knowledge is given a definition and it is sometimes this definition which is used in the later commentarial tradition. Where this is the case I have indicated it by underlining in the fifth column.

Perhaps even more important in the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* than the knowledges of the first section is a list of thirty seven (or forty one) experiences of the Buddhist path, a list which recurs on at least thirty different occasions. (There are some variations in application which make the exact count arbitrary.) Part of this list, following the eight *'jhānas'* and preceding the four paths is the sequence known to the commentaries as the eighteen *mahāvipassanā*. It is given in the third and fourth columns of the table. (The bracketed items also occur in the *Paṭisambhidā-magga*, but elsewhere.)

It is fairly obvious that the commentarial account of the stages of insight is largely built up from the materials provided by the *Paṭisambhidā-magga*.[37] This is not to say that the *Visuddhimagga* account would have been completely acceptable or even recognisable to the author of the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* (traditionally Sāriputta, the exemplar of wisdom). Looking at it the other way sophisticated account of the stages of insight—an account which does provide

36. *e.g.* N.R.M. Ehara *et al.*, *The Path of Freedom by the Arahant Upatissa*, Colombo, 1961, 298–302.

37. There, is of course, also material from the *suttas* and the term *anuloma* from the *Paṭṭhāna*.

the main features of the later model. This is clear enough if we note that it begins with detailed analysis of phenomena, moves on to contemplation of rise and fall, then to breaking up (*bhaṅga*), to the experiencing of some kind of sense of danger and subsequently to the establishment of a settled state of equipoise. After all this, there follows the transitional stage of gaining the lineage, prior to the path knowledge itself.

The historical context of the Paṭisambhidā-magga

A.K. Warder has discussed the date of the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* and concluded that, apart from a few later additions, the main parts of this text were composed in the late third century and the early second century B.C..[38] It would be possible to argue for a slightly earlier range of possibilities and in fact Warder's assumption that the work grew over a period of time could be questioned. The work is sufficiently well-integrated that a single authorship is not beyond the bounds of possibility. For present purposes, however, Warder's dating is close enough. It situates the composition of this text in a specific historical context.

That context is of some interest in itself. It is clearly subsequent to the division of the *mahāsaṅgha*, which took place at some point not too long after the Second Communal Recitation, probably as a result of a reformist move to tighten up the discipline of the community. Such movements are common in the history of religious groups which place a high value on spiritual development or moral purity. They were mentioned above in relation to the history of Southern Buddhism over the last thousand years or so. The evolution of mediæval Christian monastic orders also provides many parallel cases, to mention only one example from a wider context. It is probable that the first division of the order did not have doctrinal implications, but it is also likely that distinct schools of thought already began to emerge in this period or soon afterwards, centred around particular teaching lineages and/or specific monastic centres and regions.[39]

In terms of dating, we can suppose that three major trends had already emerged by the third century B.C.. One of these new schools of thought was the little known Pudgalavādin tradition, which seems to have been concerned, partly with a type of dialectical exploration of and/or meditation on the nature of self and partly with investigating the nature of the process of rebirth.[40] More relevant to the history of insight meditation are the two other schools of thought: the Sarvāstivādins and the Vibhajyavādins, the latter being the ancestors of the

38. Paṭis Trsl. xxix–xxxix.

39. L.S. Cousins, "The 'Five Points' and the Origins of the Buddhist Schools," in *The Buddhist Forum*, ed., T. Skorupski, Vol. II, 27–60, London, 1991.

40. See L.S. Cousins, "Person and Self," to appear in a volume to be produced following the 'Buddhism into the Year 2000' conference (Bangkok, 1990), 1995.

Ceylon tradition. When considering the Sarvāstivādins, it is customary to focus on their specific doctrine of *dharmas* as, in some sense, transcending time. Here, however, I am not so much concerned with that as with the reasons why they were interested in the subject at all.

After all, the subject of *dharmas* is precisely the subject of the fourth foundation/establishing of mindfulness: *dhamma* contemplation in regard to *dhammas* (*dhammesu dhammānupassanā*). In other words, the concerns of the early *abhidhamma* are closely related to insight meditation. In this sense one might expect these early schools of thought to share a common interest in insight meditation in so far as they are *abhidhamma*-based in their orientation.[41] Probably, in fact, that interest precedes the crystalization of distinct schools of thought. More specifically, one of the key areas of debate which eventually separated the two *abhidhamma* traditions of Sarvāstivāda and Vibhajyavāda is the exact nature of the process by which enlightenment is attained.

This debate focussed precisely upon the realization of the four noble truths at the time of achieving the 'stages of sanctity': stream-entry and so on. For the Sarvāstivādins this was a process of gradual realization (*anupūrvābhisamaya*) in which the sixteen aspects of the four truths were separately known in successive moments. The Vibhajyavādins on the other hand taught that the truths were realized simultaneously in a single moment (*ekābhisamaya*). Of course the contrast between 'sudden' and 'gradual' enlightenment is one with a long subsequent history,[42] but we should none the less be careful not to exaggerate the difference. Even sixteen moments is quite a brief period in terms of *abhidharma* and it is not clear whether the Sarvāstivādins supposed that the distinction could be observed in experience. Conversely, contemplation of different aspects of the four truths in the stages shortly before realization is quite acceptable to the tradition of the Pali commentaries. Again, it is not clear how far it was thought that this could be distinguished in practice.

The *Paṭisambhidā-magga* is in many ways a text of the *ekābhisamaya* tradition.[43] The exact historical relationship between it and the developments in the canonical Sarvāstivādin *abhidharma* is not yet known, but it is certain that

41. One might also speculate that the Pudgalavādins might have been more orientated towards *samatha* meditation, as the early Sarvāstivādins certainly were towards insight meditation. In that case the Vibhajyavādins would be seeking a compromise (as in other areas). It is certainly noticeable that the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* contains important developments in the area of calm meditation as well as the insight-orientated materials with which I am concerned in this paper.

42. David Seyfort Ruegg, *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective. On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, London, 1989, 150–192, discusses the earlier sources.

43. A.K. Warder, "Introduction," in *The Path of Discrimination*, London, 1982, vi–lxiv, espec. xxiii ff.

85/3

each cannot be fully understood without the other. One might compare the way in which the availability of previously inaccessible literature of the Buddhist logical tradition has made it possible to understand many aspects of the ancient Nyāya which were otherwise unclear. So it is not surprising that the articulation of the Vibhajyavādin insight tradition which we see already well under way in the *Paṭisambhidā-magga* is paralleled by similar developments in the Sarvāstivāda.

The formulation in that tradition which corresponds to the insight knowledges is the sequence of the set of the four skilful roots connected with penetration (*nirvedhabhāgiya*).[44] The term itself is not as frequently used in the Pali tradition, although *nibbedhabhāgiya* does occur.[45] The list of four is well-known:

1. The little flame (*ūṣmāgata*) i.e. of understanding;
2. The culmination (*mūrdhan*) i.e. of understanding;

44. On the *nirvedhabhāgiya*, see: R.E. Buswell, Jr, "The Path to Perdition: The Wholesome Roots and Their Eradication," in *Paths to Liberation, The Mārga and Its Transformations in Buddhist Thought*, eds., R.E. Buswell, Jr & Robert M. Gimello, Honolulu, 1992, 107–34; C. Cox, "Attainment through Abandonment: The Sarvāstivādin Path of Removing Defilements," *ibid.*, 63–106, 76 nn.; E. Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien III," *WZKS*, 1971, 69–121, 83; 98–101; H.V. Guenther, *Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidharma*, 2nd ed., Berkeley, 1974, 200; L. Hurvitz, "The Abhidharma on the 'Four Aids to Penetration'", in *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization*. (Guenther vol.), ed., L.S. Kawamura, Emeryville, Calif., 1977; E. Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism, From the Origins to the Śaka Era*, Louvain, 1988, 613 f.; Louis de La Vallée Poussin, "Pārāyaṇa cité dans Jñānaprasthāna," in *Études d'Orientalisme publiés par le Musée Guimet à la mémoire de Raymonde Linossier*, Paris, 1932, 323–327; Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, tr. by L. Pruden, Berkeley, 1988–90, Vol. III, 930–43; D. Seyfort Ruegg, *op. cit.*, 176; Śānti Bhikṣu Śāstri, *Jñānaprasthāna-śāstra of Kātyāyanīputra Retranslated into Sanskrit from the Chinese Version of Hiuan Tsang*, Śāntiniketan, 1955; José Van Den Bröeck, *La Saveur de L'Immortel* (A-p'i-t'an Kan Lu Wei Lun). *La version chinoise de l'Amṛtarasa de Ghoṣaka* (T. 1553), Louvain-la-neuve, 1977, 15, 70–72, 156–160; C. Willemen, *The Essence of Metaphysics*, Brussels, 1975, 68–72, 86 f.

45. The canonical passages are: D, III, 277; S, V, 87; A, II, 167; III, 427; Paṭis, I, 27; 35ff.; 48; II, 201f.; Vibh, 330 f. (*Iti*). Closely related terms occur at: D , III, 251; A, III, 410; 417; It, 35; 93, while the term *nibbedhika-* (usually applied to *paññā*) is quite frequent—PTC lists more than forty occurrences in the Pali Canon. The source of the term *nibbedhabhāgiya* seems to be the *Nibbedha-sutta* where we find the idea of the factors of awakening, when well-developed, penetrating and breaking up the mass of greed which has never previously been penetrated and broken up (and similarly with the masses of hatred and delusion) (S, V, 87). Most commonly, however, especially later, it is found last in the sequence: connected with decline, connected with stability, connected with something special, applied to types of *samādhi*, wisdom, *saññā*, etc. The *Mahāṭīkā* to Vism, 696 explains *nibbedhabhāgiya- samādhi-* as *vipassanā-samādhi*.

86/3

3. Acceptance (*kṣānti*) i.e. when it seems good to one;

4. Highest *dharma*.

I have translated the first a little loosely to get the metaphor. The source is probably M, I, 132 where Ariṭṭha who thinks he has a highly developed understanding is told that he has 'not a glimmering' (*na ... usmīkato*).[46] Skilful roots in *abhidharma* are the three of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion i.e. the seeds in the mind of generosity, loving-kindness and understanding or wisdom respectively. Here the skilful root of non-delusion is intended.[47]

At first sight the set of four may not look very close to the *Paṭisambhidā-magga*'s sixteen great insights (*mahāvipassanā*) or the list of eleven knowledges which are abstracted in Table Two. In fact, however, the last four and probably the first two of the eleven knowledges need to be omitted for comparison purposes. This leaves just five (i.e. knowledges 5–10 of the *Ñāṇakathā*) to correspond with the set of four. A case could be made for matching more exactly, but that perhaps goes beyond the evidence. Turning to the great insights, obviously sixteen is a much larger number than four ! Yet, when the objects of consciousness are considered, and these are the principal concern of the eighteen *mahāvipassanā*, the similarity is striking. The eighteen are concerned with various degrees of the three universal characteristics of all *dhammas*, while the set of four have as their object the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths. Since one of the three characteristics is precisely suffering (*dukkha*) and the other two can be considered as ways of looking at suffering,[48] the eighteen are in effect concerned with the first noble truth.

The similarity is even closer, when it is noted that contemplation of the three (or rather four) characteristics is usually said to lead to the set of four.[49] Moreover, the highest *dharma* and the most advanced degree of acceptance are said to focus specifically on the first noble truth.[50] In fact some of the Pali

46. Note that in some forms of Middle Indic where -k- is voiced (and long vowels not written) *usmīkata* and the ancestral form(s) of *uṣmāgata* would be very close, if not identical.

47. See Abhidh-k-bh, 19, which indicates that the *nirvedhabhāgiya* are *prajñā*, but can be considered as all five aggregates when their accompaniments are taken into account.

48. The first truth is often analysed in terms of the three levels of *dukkhadukkha*, *viparināmadukkha* and *saṅkhāradukkha* i.e. literal suffering, suffering as change and suffering as constructed existence (the five aggregates produced by clinging). The second and third of these are clearly related to impermanence and no-self.

49. Abhidh-k, VI, 16—emptiness is added as the fourth. Note that this too is one of the sixteen great insights.

50. Abhidh-k, VI, 19. This is already implied in the *Jñānaprasthāna*: Louis de La Vallée Poussin, "Pārāyaṇa cité dans Jñānaprasthāna," in *Études d'Orientalisme publiés par le Musée Guimet à la mémoire de Raymonde Linossier*, Paris, 1932, 325. In fact, since the preceding *nirvedhabhāgiyas* have all four truths as their object and so do

sources do relate the insight knowledges to all four truths, or at least three of them.[51] An even more striking resemblance, at least in the later versions of the two descriptions of the process leading to enlightenment, is the way in which the culmination of that process is described. The first three *nirvedhabhāgiya* are now each divided into weak, middling and strong degrees. This gives a total of ten stages for the four sets as a whole. This enlargement parallels the enlargement in the later Pali sources quite closely—there are in fact ten knowledges from knowledge of rise and fall up to lineage knowledge. This of course could be quite coincidental. What is hardly likely to be an accident is that the last stage in each case lasts for a single moment only and the preceding stage is also very brief.[52] So in each system we have eight stages, followed by two stages that transit very rapidly to enlightenment (*bodhi*).

The third of the *nirvedhabhāgiya* is acceptance (*kṣānti*), a term which is also central to the Sarvāstivādin account of the realization of the truths at awakening. The same duality is also present in the *Paṭisambhidā-magga*. On the one hand, acceptance (*khanti*) occurs as one of the knowledges of the Knowledge Discourse, "Acceptance knowledge is understanding as a result of having known (the aggregates, etc. as impermanent, etc.)."[53] Later in the Insight Discourse (*Vipassanākathā*) (based on A, III, 437; 431–433) the term occurs as *anulomikā khanti* (suitable acceptance).[54] Here it is in close association with 'certainty of rightness' (*samattaniyāma*), a term which is linked with stream-entry.

Insight in the earlier period

If then the period of the development of the *abhidhamma* schools is the time when the elaborated versions of the path of insight begin to take form, the question arises as to the source material for these enlarged versions. In fact, the *Nikāyas* contain a large quantity of such material — too large to examine here.

the sixteen moments of *abhisamaya* (taken collectively), the difference is a product of the difference between *ekābhisamaya* and *anupūrvābhisamaya*. See Abhidh-k, VI, 17.

51. Vism, 638; the application of all four truths at the moment of Stream-entry (Vism, 689 ff.) is also relevant. Compare Paṭis-a, III, 542–543: "in the noble truths" was said with reference to the comprehension of the truths separately by means of ordinary (*lokiya*) knowledge of the truths in the prior stage.

52. For the Sanskrit system, the third degree of acceptance lasts for one moment only as does the highest (ordinary) *dharma*. This is perhaps already implied in the *Jñānaprasthāna* (cited above). For the Pali system, lineage is a single moment, but two or three *anuloma* moments immediately precede it. See Vism, 673–675; Dhs-a, 231 ff.; Abhidh-av, 125. The sequence from *anuloma* to lineage to path is given in the *Paṭṭhāna*, e.g. at Tikap, 159.

53. Paṭis, I, 106.

54. Paṭis-a, II, 236–242. The same expression is at I, 123; cp. also II, 171; 183. At, I, 176 it occurs as a synonym for *saṭṭhusāsana*.

In Table Two I gave as an illustration the sequence from *yathābhūta-ñāṇadassana* to *nibbidā* to *virāga* to *vimutti*.[55] Since the first of these may represent the beginnings of insight and the last its result, we can take the two central terms as representing the heart of the process of insight. Indeed they or their verbal forms occur quite frequently in the Canon. There are of course many parallel sequences, in some of which one or more of these terms are omitted.[56] Overall, however, *nibbidā* (distaste or disenchantment) can be seen as the parallel in insight meditation to *pīti* (joy or energization) in calm meditation. So, in the one case, joy if successfully tranquillized, leads to happiness and success in controlling one's emotional life. In the other, disenchantment with the things with which one identifies or to which one clings leads to a mental clarity and a deepening of knowledge.

The importance of what is later referred to as the insight knowledges is then already clear in the *Nikāyas*. What is less clear is the context in which we are to understand this. Where insight occurs in a sequence, it usually comes after concentration or after emerging from one of the *jhānas*. Often it occurs without such a context, but in dealing with some aspect of what may be called fundamental theory. I mean, such lists as the aggregates, bases, elements, truths, conditioned origination and the like. It is quite impossible to be sure whether in these passages it is intended to operate as an exercise for even a beginner or whether all these passages are addressed to someone who has already developed *jhāna*. I incline to suspect that in most of these cases it is the latter which is envisaged because they can all be viewed as elaborations of the teaching which is particular to the Buddhas (*sāmukkaṃsikā desanā*). That teaching is specifically stated to be given when the hearer's mind is in an appropriate state. The terms used to describe his mind recall the standard descriptions of the state which is appropriate to develop the *abhiññās* i.e. after the fourth *jhāna*.

In the Canon the development of insight after the *jhānas* is certainly the normative pattern, where a full process is described at all. I exclude from consideration those cases where the *dhamma* eye, etc. are said to arise at the end of a discourse, apparently spontaneously. There is no indication, or at least not much indication, of the prior background in most such cases and hence no way of telling if it is envisaged that *jhāna* had already been developed.

The kind of modern tradition of insight meditation with which we were concerned at the beginning of this paper often lays stress on insight as the

55. e.g. S, II, 30 ff.; III, 189; A, V, 311–317. Various other formulæ give parts of this process.

56. See, for example, the discussion of the *vivekanissita* formula in: R.M.L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening, A Study of the Bodhi-Pakkhiyā Dhammā*, Leiden, 1992, 162–168 or the last of the four tetrads of breathing mindfulness.

87/3

Buddha's particular achievement. In this view calm (*samatha*) meditation involving the development of the four *jhānas* is something pre-Buddhist, even perhaps Hindu—something which is not necessary for enlightenment. It is interesting to contrast this with the view of some modern scholars that the development of the *jhānas* is the typically Buddhist form of practice or at least that most likely to have been developed by the Buddha himself.

I will return to the views of scholarship shortly, but first it is useful to consider how far the view that only insight is the proper or specifically Buddhist practice is actually justified in the canonical works. It is certainly true that there is some stress in that literature on the fact that the stages of sanctity are not found outside the Buddhist tradition. There is also, as was mentioned above, some emphasis that the teaching of the four noble truths is particular to the Buddhas. Sometimes too we read that the four establishings of mindfulness are a path which is *ekāyana*. This is often explained as 'the only way', but Rupert Gethin's excellent discussion of this term states the situation quite clearly:

> "Given that nowhere is the sense 'one and one only' clearly and definitely the proper sense, and in most cases definitely not, it seems rather perverse to adopt this sense in the *satipaṭṭhāna* context."[57]

We should probably think rather of mindfulness as leading to only one destination, i.e. *nibbāna*.

To set against this are many passages where the relationship between *samādhi* and *paññā* or between calm and insight is stressed. The later tradition does accept that there were *arahats* 'liberated by wisdom' (*paññāvimutta*) who had not developed all or even any of the four *jhānas*.[58] However, the actual references to such *arahats* in the earlier texts seem mostly to say that they had not developed the formless attainments or the first five *abhiññā*. The first four *jhānas* are conspicuously not mentioned.[59]

57. R.M.L. Gethin, *op. cit.*, 1992, 63.

58. e.g. Sv, II, 512.

59. See for example M, I, 477; S, II, 121–123; 126–127. D, II, 70 is less clear. At AN, IV, 452f. one who has not attained all eight attainments can only be regarded as 'liberated by wisdom' by way of exposition (*pariyāyena*). It is very striking that in this passage the destruction of the *āsavas* is applied to the *nevasaññānāsaññā* sphere, but not to the first *jhāna* (and according to C[e] 1971 not to the following *jhānas*). C[e] 1971 rightly corrects the absence of reference in E[e] and N[e] to destruction of the *āsavas* in regard to the *nevasaññānāsaññā* sphere in the case of the individual who is 'both ways liberated'. However, in the *Mahāmālunkya-suttanta* (M, I, 435–36) it is explicitly stated that it is possible to reach arahatship or at any rate never-return after entering the first *jhāna*. Even here it would be possible to suppose that only the immediate process of attainment is referred to. In that case the possibility that prior development of the four *jhānas* is assumed could not be ruled out. It may also be a rather later discourse in view of the relatively developed subject matter and some possibly later terminology.

Already in 1927 E J. Thomas wrote:

88/3

> "...the jhānas are only four stages in a much more extended scheme. It may of course be the case that they once formed the whole of the mystic process."[60]

Most recently, both Johannes Bronkhorst and Tilman Vetter have for different reasons taken up the view that the *jhānas* are likely to be the original core of Buddhist meditative practice.[61] It is interesting to note the contrast here with the view of many modern interpreters of Buddhism, for whom it is precisely the insight approach which is the innovative creation of Buddhism—the thing the Buddha added to what was known before. Of course, it does not necessarily follow that adding a rung or two to the top of the ladder means you can dispense with the ladder!

Given that we do not know precisely what developments had already occurred before the time of the Buddha and given that developments in teaching must have occurred during the long life-span of the Buddha himself as well as afterwards, it is difficult to say with any certainty what exactly was taught by the Buddha himself. No doubt, like any good teacher, he would have wished his followers to develop his teachings in a creative and fruitful manner. The subsequent history of Buddhism is clear enough proof that this was the case. What we can, however, say is that for most later forms of Buddhism, in India and elsewhere, the typical Buddhist approach is a synthetic one which seeks to combine differing approaches in a higher ideal.[62]

60. Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, London, 1975 [1927], 181 n.

61. J. Bronkhorst, *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Stuttgart, 1986; T. Vetter, *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, Leiden, 1988.

62. See: L.S. Cousins, "*Samatha-yāna* and *Vipassanā-yāna*," in *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Hammalava Saddhātissa*, eds., G. Dhammapāla *et al.*, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka, 1984, 55–68. For the integration of the ethical and the intellectual, see D. Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics*, London, 1992, and C. Cox, "Attainment through Abandonment: The Sarvāstivādin Path of Removing Defilements," in R. E. Buswell, Jr & R.M. Gimello, eds., *op. cit.*, for the view that "...the final goal ... subsumes knowledge and concentration as equally cooperative means rather than mutually exclusive ends." (page 66).

Buddhist Values of the Traditional Sinhalese Village

J.B. Disanayaka

1. Introduction

Values, in everyday life, cut across a wide range of interests: monetary values, functional values, utilitarian values and so on. In ethics, the science that deals with morals, the central concern is the concept of 'moral values' or 'ethical values'.

All religions, whether they believe in a God or not, whether they believe in one omnipotent God or many, whether they believe in a permanent soul or not, share in common one element: a code of moral values. There is, thus, an essential corelationship between religion and moral values.

Morality is, basically, a matter that relates to the concepts of 'right' and 'wrong'. What is morally right and what is morally wrong are not, however, absolutely objective. Although all religions share a code of moral values, these codes are not always identical. The differences stem from their histories and cultural conditioning.

The cultural milieu that gave birth to religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism vary and as such their codes of moral values also exhibit certain features that are distinctly of one religion or another.

The few moral values that religions share in common may be considered as those having universal validity. However, followers of a particular religion uphold such values not as part of a universal religious order but as part of their own religion. Hence, all moral values, whether of universal validity or not, carry the stamp of a particular religion.

For example: both Christianity and Buddhism share the moral value that it is not morally right to destroy the life of beings, human or animal. However, followers of each religion will consider this value either as a Christian value or as a Buddhist value. The Christians derive its moral validity from the first of the Ten Commandments: 'Thou shalt not kill', and the Buddhists derive its validity

of Śuddhodana, are unable to keep up the kingdom, wandering about and getting [persons] into disgrace." [54]

3.8 In what ensues, 'Brug rgyal dbang Blo bzang phrin las rnam rgyal repeats in his own words the conclusion reached by Brag sgo rab 'byams pa, namely, that none of the canonical reports concerning the Buddha Śākyamuni's life knows of a servant of the Teacher other than Ānanda.[55] He goes so far as to ask if any of the learned Rnying ma pas would be able to give a canonical source for Sunakṣatra being the Buddha's servant.[56] He would have found an answer to this question if he had read the *Bai ḍūrya g.ya' sel* by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, an eminent Dge lugs pa scholar.

54. *'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar*, 354, 18–20 (Corresponding verses are in the *U rgyan ghu ru pa dma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs rnam thar rgyas par bkod pa las shel brag ma*, Xeroxcopy of the manuscript kept in the Institut für Kultur und Geschichte Indiens und Tibets, Hamburg, in the Indologisches Seminar, Bonn, fol. 74a7–b1; the variant readings are noted in brackets): *lo ni nyi shu rtsa lnga* [*bzhir*] *khyod g.yog byas* ‖ *yon tan til 'bru tsam zhig ngas ma* (19) *mthong* ‖ *zas* [*rgyal*] *gtsang* [*po*] *sras* [*zas*] *po* [*gtsang*] *rgyal srid* [*sa*] *ma* [74b] *zin pa'i* ‖ *go ma chod kyi mi* (20) *'khyams rkang 'dren po* [*pas*].

'Jam mgon chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar, 355, 2–4: ... *shākya* (3) *thub pa'i rim gro pa kun dga' bo ma gtogs snga phyi gnyis byung bar gang nas byang* (4) *ma bshad la* ‖.

'Jam mgon 'chos kyi rgyal po tsong kha pa chen po'i rnam thar, 355, 11–12: *sngon chad rnying ma mkhas pa su la 'ang khungs ston rgyu ma byung ba ma* (12) *zad* ‖.

89/3

Buddhist Forum VOL III
SOAS 1994

Bhavaṅga and Rebirth According to the Abhidhamma

Rupert Gethin

The bare notion of *bhavaṅga* consciousness is not unfamiliar to students of Theravāda Buddhism. It has been discussed briefly by a number of writers over the years. However, as with many other basic conceptions of Buddhist thought, if one searches for a straightforward account of just what is said in the Pāli sources, one soon discovers that what is written in the secondary sources is inadequate, sometimes contradictory and certainly incomplete.[1] Existing discussions of *bhavaṅga* largely confine themselves to the way *bhavaṅga* functions in the Abhidhamma theory of the process of consciousness (*citta-vīthi*). It is pointed out how *bhavaṅga* is the state in which the mind is said to rest when no active consciousness process is occurring: thus *bhavaṅga* is one's state of mind when nothing appears to be going on, such as when one is in a state of deep dreamless sleep, and also momentarily between each active consciousness process. This is about as far as one can go before running into problems.

One might be tempted to say that *bhavaṅga* is the Abhidhamma term for "unconsciousness" or for "unconscious" states of mind, but the use of such expressions in order to elucidate this technical Abhidhamma term turns out to be rather unhelpful, not to say confusing. Their English usage is at once too imprecise and too specific. For example, ordinary usage would presumably define as "unconscious" the state of one who is asleep (whether dreaming or not), who is in a coma, who has fainted, or who has been "knocked unconscious", etc. But it is not clear that Abhidhamma usage would necessarily uniformly apply the term *bhavaṅga* to these conditions, in fact it is clear that in one instance—the instance of one who is asleep but dreaming—it would not (see below). Thus if *bhavaṅga*

1. See E.R. Sarathchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception*, Colombo, 1961, 75–96 (this is the fullest account); *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, ed., G.P. Malalasekera *et al.*, Colombo, 1961–, s.v. *bhavaṅga*; Nyanatiloka Thera, *Buddhist Dictionary*, Colombo, Frewin & Co., 1956, s.v. *bhavaṅga*; V.F. Gunaratna, "Rebirth Explained", *The Wheel*, 167/169, Kandy, 1980; L.S. Cousins, "The Paṭṭhāna and the Development of the Theravādin Abhidhamma", *JPTS*, 10, 1981, 22–46, 22–5; S. Collins, *Selfless Persons*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, 238–47 (the fullest account in more recent literature).

90/3

is to be understood as "unconsciousness", it must be as a specific kind of unconsciousness. Furthermore, it is surely stretching the use of ordinary language to say that someone who is "conscious" is "unconscious" between every thought. But if the expressions "unconsciousness" and "unconscious" are sometimes vague in their usage, they become even more problematic in the present context as a result of their association with certain quite specific modern psychoanalytic theories of the "unconscious".

Partially reflecting this specific association of the "psychoanalytic unconscious" on the one hand and the somewhat vague "state of unconsciousness" on the other, discussions of *bhavaṅga* have tended in one of two alternative directions: they have either tended to see *bhavaṅga* as something akin to the contemporary idea of the unconscious; or they have tended to see *bhavaṅga* as a kind of mental blank. As an example of the first tendency, Nyanatiloka writes of *bhavaṅga* in the following terms:

> "Herein since time immemorial, all impressions and experiences are, as it were, stored up or, better said, are functioning but concealed as such to full consciousness from where however they occasionally emerge as subconscious phenomena and approach the threshold of full consciousness."[2]

Other more recent writers, such as Steven Collins and Paul Griffiths, convey the impression that *bhavaṅga* is to be understood as a kind of blank, empty state of mind—a type of consciousness that has no content.[3] For Collins *bhavaṅga* is a kind of logical "stop-gap" that ties together what would otherwise be disparate consciousness processes (and disparate lives):

> "In the cases of the process of death and rebirth, of the ordinary processes of perception, and of deep sleep, the *bhavaṅga* functions quite literally as a 'stop-gap' in the sequence of moments which constitutes mental continuity."[4]

He goes on to suggest that modern Theravāda Buddhist writers such as Nyanatiloka who apparently understand *bhavaṅga* as something akin to a psychoanalytic concept of the "unconscious" have entered the realm of creative Buddhist

2. Nyanatiloka Thera, *op. cit.*, 29. Cf. Gunaratna, *op. cit.*, 23–5; P. De Silva, *Buddhist and Freudian Psychology*, Colombo, Lake House, 1973, 52–3. De Silva does not explicitly equate *bhavaṅga* and the unconscious as implied by Collins, *op. cit.*, 304, n. 22, he merely discusses the term in this connection and in fact acknowledges that the term is problematic since what scholars have said about it seems contradictory and to involve a certain interpretive element.
3. See S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 238–47; P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless: Buddhist Meditation and the Mind-Body Problem*, La Salle, Open Court Publishing Co., 1986, 38–9; Griffiths, quite mistakenly, even goes so far as to state that "*bhavaṅga* is a type of consciousness that operates with no object" (36).
4. S. Collins, *op cit.*, 2, 45.

psychology; the ancient literature, says Collins, does not support such an understanding.[5] The writers cited by Collins do not generally explicitly invoke the concept of the psychoanalytic unconscious, but it seems fair to say that some of what they say about *bhavaṅga* tends in that direction, and certainly it is the case that these writers have not made clear how they arrive at some of their conclusions on the basis of what is actually said in the texts. In such circumstances a careful consideration of the way in which *bhavaṅga* is presented in the ancient sources seems appropriate. My basic sources for this exposition of the nature of *bhavaṅga* are the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa, the *Atthasālinī* (Buddhaghosa's commentary to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*), Buddhadatta's *Abhidhammāvatāra* and Anuruddha's *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.[6]

In the first place, I shall point out in this paper that the tendency to view *bhavaṅga* as a mental blank simply does not reflect what is said in the texts. If *bhavaṅga* is "unconsciousness", then it certainly is not unconsciousness in the sense of a mental blank. In fact *bhavaṅga* is understood in the texts as in most respects sharing the same properties as other types of consciousness (*citta*); *bhavaṅga* is not something different from conscisousness, rather it is consciousness operating in a particular mode (*ākāra*) or consciousness performing a particular function (*kicca*).[7] Secondly, while I do not wish to get involved here in

5. S. Collins, *op. cit.*, 243–4: "Certainly, the *bhavaṅga* is a mental but not conscious phenomenon; but in following the sense of the term 'unconscious' further into psychoanalytic theory, the similarity ends. For Freud, the word unconscious was used not only in what he called a 'descriptive' sense, but also in a 'systematic' sense. That is, as he writes, apart from the descriptive sense, in which 'we call a psychical process unconscious whose existence we are obliged to assume—for some such reason as that we infer it from its effects—but of which we know nothing', it is also the case that 'we have come to understand the term "unconscious" in a topographical or systematic sense as well . . . and have used the word more to denote a mental province rather than a quality of what is mental'. Insofar as the Buddhist concept of *bhavaṅga* might be thought of as being part of a *topographical* account of mind, it is so only in relation to a systematic account of perception, and not of motivation. The motivation of action, of course, is the crucial area of psychology for any psychoanalytic theory. While many aspects of the Buddhist attitude to motivation do resemble some Freudian themes, they are nowhere related systematically to *bhavaṅga* in the *Theravāda* tradition before modern times. Accordingly, the modern comparison between *bhavaṅga* and psychoanalytic unconscious must be developed as part of what one might call 'speculative' or 'creative' Buddhist philosophy, rather than by historical scholarship."
6. References to the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* and its commentary are to *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha and Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, ed. by Hammalawa Saddhātissa, PTS, 1989 and to two translations (which do not include the commentary): S.Z. Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, PTS, 1910; Nārada Mahāthera, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, Kandy, 4th edition, 1980.
7. *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 110; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 13–4; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 114–7; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 159–74.

91/3

detailed discussions of the extent to which the Theravāda notion of *bhavaṅga* does or does not correspond to a psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious, I do wish to argue that *bhavaṅga* is clearly understood in the ancient literature as a mental province that defines the essential character and capabilities of a given being, and that this mental province is seen as exerting some kind of influence on conscious mental states.

Bhavaṅga and Consciousness

As defined in the Abhidhamma, then, *bhavaṅga* is truly a kind or mode or function of "consciousness" (*citta*), it is most definitely not "unconscious" (*acittaka*).[8] The Theravādin Abhidhamma treats *citta* as one of the four *paramattha-dhammas* along with *cetasika*, *rūpa* and *nibbāna*. As is well known, the Abhidhamma works with what is essentially an intensional model of consciousness: to be conscious is to be conscious of some particular object. Thus the *Aṭṭhasālinī* defines *citta*'s particular characteristic as a *dhamma* as that which "thinks of an object".[9] So *bhavaṅga*, like all *citta*, is conscious of something.[10] (Our lack of awareness of *bhavaṅga* should be explained not by reference to *bhavaṅga*'s being unconscious, but by reference to our not clearly remembering what we were conscious of in *bhavaṅga*.) I shall return to the question of the object of *bhavaṅga* below, but, in general, objects of the mind may be of four kinds: a physical object (i.e., a past, present or future sight, sound, smell, taste or bodily sensation), a mental object (i.e., a past, present or future complex of *citta* and *cetasika*), a concept (*paññatti*), and the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata-dhātu*, *nibbāna*);[11] the object of *bhavaṅga* may be any of the first three kinds but is in effect always a past object, except in the case of *paññatti*, which is "not to be

8. Whether one is, from the physiological point of view, conscious or unconscious in fact turns out to have nothing to do with whether one is in *bhavaṅga* or not; *bhavaṅga-citta* is contrasted with *vīthi-citta* or process-consciousness, and active consciousness processes can occur whether one is conscious or unconscious (as in the case of dreams, see notes 15 and 45 below). Thus *bhavaṅga* is understood to be a *citta* and not *acittaka*; from the Abhidhamma point of view the only times a being is strictly unconscious (*acittaka*) is in the meditation attainment that leads to rebirth amongst the "unconscious beings" (*asaññā-satta*), when reborn as an unconscious being, and during the attainment of cessation (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha* or *nirodha-samāpatti*). The attainment of cessation as being *acittaka* is discussed by Griffiths (*op. cit.*); on the *asaññā-sattas* see D, I, 28, Sv 118; DAṬ, I, 217.

9. *Aṭṭhasālinī*, 63: *ārammaṇaṃ cinteti ti cittaṃ*.

10. For a specific reference to *bhavaṅga*'s having an object see *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 114.

11. *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 43–48; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 15–6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 119–22; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 181–94.

classified" (*na-vattabba*) as either past, present or future.[12] According to Theravāda Abhidhamma *citta* cannot arise as a *dhamma* in isolation from other *dhammas*; it always occurs associated (*sampayutta*) with other mental *dhammas* or *cetasikas*. The minimum number of associated *cetasikas* is seven according to the post-canonical Abhidhamma;[13] the maximum is thirty-six.[14] In general, the eighteen kinds of mind without motivations (*ahetuka*) which perform the more or less mechanical part of the consciousness process are simpler in nature with fewer *cetasikas* than the kinds of mind that have motivations (*sahetuka*). I shall return to the question of the nature of the specific types of mind that can perform the function of *bhavaṅga* below; suffice it to note here that they have ten, or between thirty and thirty-four *cetasikas*; from this perspective *bhavaṅga* is as rich and complex a form of consciousness as any other type of consciousness.

Consciousness is said to be in its *bhavaṅga* mode whenever no active consciousness process is occurring; in other words, *bhavaṅga* is the passive, inactive state of the mind—the mind when resting in itself. Ordinary waking consciousness is to be understood as the mind continually and very rapidly emerging from and lapsing back into *bhavaṅga* in response to various sense stimuli coming in through the five sense-doors and giving rise to sense-door consciousness processes; these will be interspersed with mind-door processes of various sorts. In contrast, the dream state is understood as essentially confined to mind-door processes occurring in what the texts, following the *Milindapañha*, call "monkey sleep" (*kapi-niddā*, *kapi-middha*, *makkaṭa-niddā*).[15] In deep sleep, the mind rests in inactivity and does not emerge from *bhavaṅga*.[16]

This basic switching between a passive and active state of mind is understood to apply not only to the consciousness of human beings but to that of all beings in the thirty-one realms of existence, from beings suffering in *niraya* to the *brahmās* in the pure abodes and formless realms; the only exception is the case

12. Strictly during the process of rebirth, it is possible for *bhavaṅga* briefly—for four consciousness moments—to have a present sense-object; see *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 137, 141. The process of death and rebirth is discussed in more detail below.

13. The so called seven universals (*sabba-citta-sādhāraṇa*) (*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 94–5; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 77–9). The *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* might be interpreted as in theory allowing a minimum of six since it does not mention *manasikāra* at *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, 87.

14. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 8–11; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 102–10; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 127–41.

15. See *Milindapañha*, 300; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 406–8.

16. *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 114 states that when no other *citta* arises interrupting its flow, such as when one has fallen into dreamless sleep, and so on, *bhavaṅga* occurs endlessly, like a flowing stream (*asati santāna-vinivattake aññasmiṃ cittuppāde nadi-sotaṃ viya supinaṃ apassato niddokkamana-kālādīsu aparimāṇa-saṃkhaṃ pi pavattati yevā ti*).

of "unconscious beings" (*asañña-satta*), who remain without any consciousness (*acittaka*) for 500 *mahākappas*.[17] In other words, to have a mind, to be conscious, is to switch between these two modes of mind. In technical terms, this switching between the passive and active modes of consciousness corresponds to a switching between states of mind that are the results (*vipāka*) of previous *kamma* (that is, previous active states of consciousness) and the states of consciousness that are actively wholesome (*kusala*) and unwholesome (*akusala*) and constitute *kamma* on the mental level, motivating acts of speech and body, and which are thus themselves productive of results.

If *bhavaṅga* is essentially consciousness in its passsive mode, then what exactly is the nature of this passive, resultant kind of mind? The tendency for some modern commentators to assume that *bhavaṅga* is a sort of mental blank is surprising in certain respects, since the texts in fact give a considerable amount of information on the question, but it probably follows from a failure to take into account the Abhidhamma schema as a whole. I have already indicated some ways in which *bhavaṅga* is as sophisticated and complex a kind of consciousness as any other, and at this point it is worth filling in some further details.

The developed Abhidhamma system gives eighty-nine (or 121) basic classes of consciousness.[18] These classes of consciousness themselves are divided up in the texts according to various schemes of classification, the most fundamental of which reveals a fourfold hierarchy of consciousness. At the bottom end of the scale, there are the fifty-four classes of consciousness that pertain to the sphere of the five senses (*kāmāvacara*); this broad category of consciousness is characteristic of the normal state of mind of not only human beings, but also animals, hungry ghosts, hell beings, *asuras*, and *devas*. Next come the fifteen classes of consciousness pertaining to the sphere of form (*rūpāvacara*), followed by the twelve classes of consciousness of the formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*); both these categories characterise the normal state of mind of various types of divine being designated *brahmās*, and also the state of mind of other beings when attaining the *jhānas* and formless attainments respectively. Finally, there are the eight kinds of world-transcending (*lokuttara*) consciousness; these types of consciousness have *nibbāna* as their object, and are experienced only at the time of attaining one of the eight paths and fruits of stream-attainment

17. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 23–4; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 142; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 242–5.

18. See *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 81–110; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 1–15 (*citta-niddesa*); *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 1–5 (*citta-paricchedo*). The schema of eighty-nine classes of *citta* is distilled by the commentarial tradition from the *cittuppādakaṇḍa* of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (9–124), which by exploiting a number of different variables greatly multiplies the number of possible classes.

(*sotāpatti*), once-return (*sakadāgāmitā*), non-return (*anāgāmitā*), and *arahant*-ship.

Various other schemes of classification operate within these four broad categories. Thus, certain of the eighty-nine *cittas* are wholesome, certain unwholesome, certain resultant, certain *kiriya*;[19] certain of them are with motivations (*sahetuka*), certain without motivations (*ahetuka*).[20] Not all of these latter categories are relevant in each of the former four broad categories. In terms of our earlier discussion, *kusala*/*akusala* comprises the thirty-three *cittas* of the eighty-nine that function as the active *kamma* of the mind.[21] The category of resultant or *vipāka* comprises the thirty-six kinds of mind that are the passive results in various ways of the previous thirty-three. Since *bhavaṅga* is an example of mind that is *vipāka*, it is worth looking a little more closely at these varieties of mind. Of the thirty-six *vipākas*, twenty three belong to the *kāmāvacara*, five to the *rūpāvacara*, four to the *arūpāvacara*, and four to the *lokuttara*. *Vipākas* may be the results of either previous *kusala* or previous *akusala* states of mind; of the thirty-six, seven are the results of unwholesome states of mind, the remaining twenty-nine are the results of wholesome states of mind.

Beings experience the results of wholesome and unwholesome states of mind in a variety of ways. Leaving aside the perhaps rather exceptional circumstances of the experience of the transcendent *vipākas*, resultant *citta* is taken as most commonly experienced, at least consciously, in the process of sensory perception.[22] The bare experience of all pleasant and unpleasant sensory stimuli

19. *Kiriya-citta* is a class of consciousness that is neither productive of a result (i.e., it is not actively wholesome or unwholesome) nor is it the result of actively wholesome or unwholesome *citta*: it is neither *kamma* nor *vipāka* (see *Atthasālinī*, 293). For the most part, the term thus defines the consciousness of Buddhas and arahants, and consists of seventeen classes of *citta* that in principle mirror the seventeen classes of actively wholesome *citta* of the sense, form, and formless spheres. However, there are two classes of *kiriya-citta* essential to the processes of thinking and that all beings continually experience in ordinary consciousness: *citta* that adverts to the five sense-doors (*kiriya-mano-dhātu, pañca-dvārāvajjana*) and *citta* that adverts to the mind-door (*kiriya-mano-viññāṇa-dhātu, manodvārāvajjana*).

20. There are in essence six *dhammas* that are regarded as *hetus*: greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), non-attachment (*alobha*), friendliness (*adosa*), and wisdom (*amoha*). These *dhammas* are *hetus* in the sense of being "roots" (*mūla*) (*Atthasālinī*, 46, 154). Of the eighty-nine classes of *citta*, eighteen are said to be without *hetus* (in principle the basic consciousnesses of the sense door process), the remaining seventy-one all arise with either one, two or three *hetus*. See *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 12–3; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 113–4; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 154–9.

21. Twelve *akusala* and eight *kusala* from the *kāmāvacara*, five and four *kusala* from the *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara* respectively, four from the *lokuttara*.

22. For the consciousness process in the ancient texts, see: *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 110–24, XVII, 120–45, XX, 43–5; *Atthasālinī*, 266–87; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 49–59;

through the five senses is regarded as the result of previous wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* respectively. This accounts for ten of the thirty-six *vipākas*.[23] In the wake of this experience, in order to respond actively with wholesome or unwholesome *kamma* at the stage known as "impulsion" (*javana*), the mind must pass first of all through the stages of "receiving" (*sampaṭi-cchana*), "investigating" (*santīraṇa*) and "determining" (*voṭṭhapana*); the first two of these three stages are also understood to be the province of five specific types of *vipāka* consciousness.[24] At the conclusion of such a sense-door process and also at the conclusion of a *kāmāvacara* mind-door process, the mind, having reached the end of the active *javana* stage, may pass on to a stage of the consciousness process known as *tad-ārammaṇa* or "taking the same object". At this stage one of the eight *mahāvipāka-cittas* (the eight *kāmāvacara vipākas* with motivations) holds on to the object of the consciousness process for one or two moments. This brings us directly to the notion of *bhavaṅga*, for *tad-ārammaṇa* is understood as something of a transitional stage between the truly active mode of mind and its resting in inactivity.[25] Thus, at the conclusion of a consciousness process, the mind, no longer in its active mode, nevertheless momentarily holds on to the object it has just savoured, before finally letting go of that object and lapsing back into the inactive state whence it had previously emerged.

Of the total of eighty-nine classes of consciousness, nineteen among the thirty-six *vipākas* are said to be able to perform the function of *bhavaṅga*: unwholesome resultant investigating consciousness, wholesome resultant investigating consciousness, the eight sense-sphere resultants with motivations, the five form-sphere resultants and the four formless-sphere resultants.[26] Thus *bhavaṅga* consciousness is not just of one single type; the range of *citta* that can perform this function is considerable. Since the kind of *citta* that can perform the function of *bhavaṅga* is exclusively resultant, it is a being's previous wholesome and unwholesome *kamma* that will determine precisely which of the nineteen possible classes will perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for that being.[27] Thus, at the risk of spelling out the obvious, unwholesome resultant investigating consciousness (*akusala-vipāka-upekkhāsahagata-santīraṇa-citta*) is considered to result from the twelve varieties of actively unwholesome *citta* motivated by delusion and greed, delusion and hate, or merely delusion. A being who experiences this as his or her *bhavaṅga* must be one of four kinds: a hell being, an animal, a hungry ghost, or an *asura*. Wholesome resultant investigating consciousness, on the other hand, is the result of actively wholesome consciousness of the sense-sphere, but wholesome consciousness that is somehow compromised—it is not *that* wholesome. In other words, it appears to be regarded as the result of rather weak varieties of the four classes of wholesome sense-sphere consciousness that are not associated with knowledge (*ñāṇa-vippayutta*) and thus have only two of the three wholesome motivations: non-attachment (*alobha*) and friendliness (*adosa*). This kind of *citta* is said to function as *bhavaṅga* for human beings born with some serious disability.[28] The eight wholesome sense-sphere resultants with motivations are the results of stronger wholesome *cittas* which they exactly mirror, being either with just two motivations or with all three motivations. These are the *bhavaṅga* for normal human beings and also for the various classes of sense-sphere *devas*. The five form-sphere and four formless-sphere resultant *cittas* again exactly mirror their actively wholesome counterparts and perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for the different kinds of *brahmā*.

What follows from this is that it is the nature of *bhavaṅga* that defines in general what kind of being one is—it gives one's general place in the overall scheme of things. However, as the implications of this understanding are drawn out, I think it becomes clear that we need to go further than this: *bhavaṅga* does not simply define *what* one is, it defines precisely *who* one is

The kind of *bhavaṅga* within a general class of beings is also variable, and this relates to the kind of experiences that a being may experience during his or her

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Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha, 17–21. The fullest modern accounts are to be found in: Saraṇchandra, *op. cit.*; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 25–53 (this is an important account by a Burmese Abhidhamma master which seems in places to be based on continuing Burmese Abhidhamma traditions); Gunaratna, *op. cit.*; Cousins, *op. cit.* For briefer summaries, see: Lama Anagarika Govinda, *The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy*, London, 1969, 129–42; W.F. Jayasuriya, *The Psychology and Philosophy of Buddhism*, Kuala Lumpur, Buddhist Missionary Society, 1976, 100–8; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, London, 1962, 186–91.

Five varieties each of *akusala-vipāka* and *kusala-vipāka* sense consciousness.

Two receiving *cittas* (*akusala-* and *kusala-vipāka*); three investigating *cittas* (*akusala-vipāka* and two *kusala-vipāka*). The function of *voṭṭhapana* is performed by the *kiriya mano-viññāṇa-dhātu/mano-dvārāvajjana citta*.

Aṭṭhasālinī, 270–1, discusses how in different circumstances *tad-ārammaṇa* can be termed "root" (*mūla*) *bhavaṅga* and "visiting" (*āgantuka*) *bhavaṅga*.

Visuddhimagga, XIV, 113–4; *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 13.

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27. The details of what follows are taken primarily from the discussion of the four kinds of *paṭisandhi* and of *kamma* (*Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 23–6; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 139–49; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 241–55, but reference has also been made to *Aṭṭhasālinī*, 267–88 (275), *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 49 (vv. 382–3).

28. *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 134: *tattha akusala-vipākāya ahetuka-manoviññāṇa-dhātuyā apāyesu paṭisandhi hoti. kusala-vipākāya manussa-loke jaco-andha-jāti-badhira-jāti-ummattaka-jāti-eḷamūgānapuṇsakādīnaṃ. aṭṭhahi sahetuka-kāmāvacara-vipākehi kāmāvacara-devesu ceva manussesu ca puññavantānaṃ paṭisandhi hoti. pañcahi rūpāvacara-vipākehi rūpi-brahmaloke. catūhi arūpāvacara-vipākehi arūpa-loke ti yena ca yattha paṭisandhi hoti sā eva tassa anurūpā paṭisandhi nāma.* Also cf. *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 111–3; incidentally, here wholesome resultant investigating *citta* is described as the result of weak two-motivational wholesome *kamma* (*dubbala-dvihetuka-kusala-vipāka*).

94/3

lifetime. The general principle of this way of thinking is established by the fact that beings in any of the four descents—beings with a *bhavaṅga* that is unwholesome resultant *citta* without motivations—are said to be intrinsically unable to generate, however hard they try, the five kinds of form-sphere *jhāna* consciousness, the four formless-sphere consciousnesses and the eight varieties of transcendent consciousness—all these kinds of *citta* are quite simply beyond their capabilities.[29]

But let us consider this further with regard to human beings. Human beings can be born with three basic classes of *bhavaṅga*: (i) the wholesome resultant *citta* without motivations; (ii) the four kinds of two-motivationed wholesome resultant *citta*; (iii) the four kinds of three-motivationed wholesome resultant *citta*. The texts further refine this by splitting the second category to give four classes of *bhavaṅga* for human beings: two-motivationed wholesome resultant *citta* may be either the result of two-motivationed wholesome *citta* alone, or it may be the result of two-motivationed wholesome *citta* and weak three-motivationed wholesome *citta*; three motivationed resultant *citta* is exclusively the result of three-motivationed wholesome *citta*. However, even among human beings, it is only those with a three-motivationed *bhavaṅga*—a *bhavaṅga* that includes the motivation of wisdom (*amoha*)—that can generate *jhāna* consciousness and the other attainments.[30]

Bhavaṅga and the Process of Death and Rebirth

Having discussed the nature of the kinds of *citta* that can function as *bhavaṅga* for different kinds of beings, it is necessary at this point to look more closely at the process by which a being's *bhavaṅga* is established. A being's *bhavaṅga* is of the same type throughout his or her life—this is, of course, just another way of saying that it is the *bhavaṅga* that defines the kind of being.[31] It follows that the only time the nature of a being's *bhavaṅga* can change is during the process of death and rebirth. So how does it come about that a being's *bhavaṅga* is of such and such a kind and not another?

Essentially the nature of *bhavaṅga* for a given lifetime is determined by the last full consciousness process of the immediately preceding life. This last process is in turn strongly influenced and directly conditioned by—though it is, of

29. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 21: *duhetukānam ahetukānañ ca panettha kiriyā-javanāni ceva appanā-javanāni ca na labbhanti.*

30. This follows from Buddhadatta's full exposition of which classes of consciousness are experienced by which kinds of being; see *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 38–9 (vv. 215–85).

31. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 24: "Thus rebirth, *bhavaṅga* and the mind at death in a single birth are just one and have one object."(*paṭisandhi bhavaṅgañ ca tathā cavana-mānasaṃ | ekam eva tath' ev' eka-visayañ c' eka-jātiyaṃ*).

course, not its *result* in the technical sense of *vipāka*—the *kamma* performed by the being during his or her life.[32] Relevant here is a fourfold classification of *kamma* according to what will take precedence in ripening and bearing fruit. The four varieties are "weighty" (*garuka*), "proximate" (*āsanna*), "habitual" (*bahula, āciṇṇa*), "performed" (*kaṭattā*).[33] This list is explicitly understood as primarily relevant to the time of death. In other words, it is intended to answer the question: at the time of death, which of the many *kammas* a being has performed during his or her lifetime is going to bear fruit and condition rebirth?[34] The answer is that if any "weighty" *kammas* have been performed then these must inevitably come before the mind in some way and overshadow the last consciousness process of a being's life. But if there are no weighty *kammas* then, at least according to the traditions followed by the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, some significant act recalled or done at the time of death will condition the rebirth.[35] In the absence

32. The relevant conditions would be *nissaya, upanissaya, āsevana.*

33. *Visuddhimagga*, XIX, 14–16; *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 117 (v. 1244); *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 24.

34. The key to interpreting the list is the comment made with regard to *kamma* that is *kaṭattā*: in the absence of the other three, it effects rebirth (*Visuddhimagga*, XIX, 15: *tesaṃ abhāve taṃ paṭisandhiṃ ākaḍḍhati*). However, *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, 130–31 gives the fullest comment: "Therein *kamma* may be either unwholesome or wholesome; among weighty and unweighty *kammas*, that which is weighty—on the unwholesome side, *kamma* such as killing one's mother, etc., or on the wholesome side, sublime *kamma* [i.e., the *jhāna*, etc.]—ripens first, like a great flood washing over lesser waters, even if there are proximate *kammas* and the rest. Therefore, it is called weighty. In its absence, among distant and proximate *kammas*, that which is proximate and recalled at the time of death ripens first. There is nothing to say about that which is done close to the time of death. But if this too is absent, among habitual and unhabitual *kammas*, that which is habitual, whether wholesome or unwholesome, ripens first. But *kamma* because of performance, which is something repeated, effects rebirth in the absence of the previous [three]." (*tattha kusalaṃ vā hotu akusalaṃ vā garukāgarukesu yaṃ garukaṃ akusala-pakkhe māṇghātakādi-kammaṃ kusala-pakkhe mahaggata-kammaṃ vā tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati, sati pi āsannādi-kamme parittaṃ udakaṃ otharitvā gacchanto mahogho viya. tathā hi taṃ garukan ti vuccati. tasmiṃ asati dūrāsannesu yaṃ āsannaṃ maraṇa-kāle anussariaṃ tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati. āsanna-kāle kate vatthabam eva uatthi. tasmiṃ asati āciṇṇānāciṇṇesu ca yaṃ āciṇṇaṃ susīlyaṃ vā dussīlyaṃ vā tad eva paṭhamaṃ vipaccati. kaṭattā-kammaṃ pana laddhāsevanaṃ purimānaṃ abhāvena paṭisandhiṃ ākaḍḍhati.*)

35. The *Visuddhimagga* and *Abhidhammāvatāra* give habitual *kamma* precedence over death proximate *kamma*; *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, 131 acknowledges the discrepancy but argues that the order preserved in *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, makes better sense: "As when the gate of a cowpen full of cattle is opened, although there are steers and bulls behind, the animal close to the gate of the pen, even if it is a weak old cow, gets out first. Thus, even when there are other strong wholesome and unwholesome *kammas*, because of being close to the time of death, that which is proximate gives its result first and is therefore given here first." (*yathā pana gogaṇa-paripuṇṇassa vajassa dvāre vivaṭe aparabhāge dammagava-balavagavesu santesu pi*

95/3

of this, that which has been done repeatedly and habitually will play the key role. Failing that, any repeated act can take centre-stage at the time of death.

The mechanics of the final consciousness process are discussed in some detail in both the *Visuddhimagga* and the *Sammohavinodanī*, and are summarised in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*.[36] The account of any consciousness processes begins with *bhavaṅga*. From *bhavaṅga* the mind adverts in order to take up some different object. If the object is a present sense object, in normal circumstances, the mind adverts to the appropriate sense door by means of the *kiriya* mind element (*mano-dhātu*); if the object is a past (or future) sense-object, *citta* or *cetasika*, or a concept (*paññatti*), the mind adverts to the mind door by the *kiriya* mind consciousness element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). The object of the death consciousness process may be either a sense-object (past or present), or *citta* and *cetasika* (past), or a concept; the process may thus occur either at one of the sense-doors or at the mind-door. Having reached the stage of *javana*, either by way of one of the sense-doors or just the mind-door, five moments of *javana* will occur, followed in certain circumstances by two moments of *tad-ārammaṇa*. Immediately after this is the last consciousness moment of the lifetime in question; this is a final moment of the old *bhavaṅga*, and it receives the technical name of "falling away" or "death consciousness" (*cuti-citta*). It is important to note that this final moment of *bhavaṅga* takes as its object precisely the same object it has always taken throughout life. However, the last *bhavaṅga* of one life is immediately followed by the first *bhavaṅga* of the next life; this first moment of *bhavaṅga* is called "relinking" or "rebirth consciousness" (*paṭisandhi-citta*) and, being directly conditioned by the last *javana* consciousnesses of the previous life, it takes as its object the very same object as those—that is, an object that is different from the object of the old *bhavaṅga*. Thus the new *bhavaṅga* is a *vipāka* corresponding in nature and kind to the last active consciousnesses of the previous life, with which it shares the same object. The *paṭisandhi* is followed by further occurrences of the new *bhavaṅga* until some consciousness process eventually takes place.

It is worth considering the nature of the object of the death consciousness process further in order to try to form a clearer picture of just what is understood to be going on. The object of the death process receives one of three technical

yo vaja-dvārassa āsanno hoti antamaso dubbalajaragavo pi, so yeva paṭhamataraṃ nikkhamati. evaṃ garukaṃ aññesu kusalākusalesu santesu pi, maraṇa-kālassa āsannattā āsannaṃ eva paṭhamaṃ vipākaṃ dassi ti idha taṃ paṭhamaṃ vuttaṃ.)

36. *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 133–45; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 155–60; *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*, 27–8; Aung, *Compendium of Philosophy*, 149–53; Nārada, *A Manual of Abhidhamma*, 265–74.

names: *kamma*, sign of *kamma* (*kamma-nimitta*), sign of destiny (*gatinimitta*).[37] In terms of the earlier classification, *kamma* is past *citta* and *cetasika* cognised at the mind-door;[38] what is being said is that at the time of death a being may directly remember a past action, making the actual mental volition of that past action the object of the mind. What seems to be envisaged, though the texts do not quite spell this out, is that this memory prompts a kind of reliving of the original *kamma*: one experiences again a wholesome or unwholesome state of mind similar to the state of mind experienced at the time of performing the remembered action. This reliving of the experience is what directly conditions the rebirth consciousness and the subsequent *bhavaṅga*. A *kamma-nimitta* is a sense-object (either past or present) or a concept. Again what is envisaged is that at the time of death some past sense-object associated with a particular past action comes before the mind (i.e., is remembered) and once more prompts a kind of reliving of the experience. By way of example, the *Vibhaṅga* commentary tells the story of someone who had a *cetiya* built which then appeared to him as he lay on his death bed. Cases where a present sense-object prompts a new action at the actual time of death seem also to be classified as *kamma-nimitta*. For example, the last consciousness process of a given life may involve experiencing a sense-object that prompts greed *citta* at the stage of *javana*, or the dying person's relatives may present him with flowers or incense that are to be offered on his behalf, and thus provide the occasion for a wholesome *javana*, or the dying person may hear the Dhamma being chanted.[39] The conceptual objects of the *jhānas* and formless attainments are also to be classified as *kamma-nimitta* in the context of the dying process. Thus, for a being about to be reborn as a *brahmā* in one of the realms of the *rūpa-dhātu*, the object of previous meditation attainments comes before him and effectively he attains *jhāna* just before he dies. A *gati-nimitta* is a present sense-object but perceived at the mind door.[40] This kind

37. *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 155–6.

38. *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 156 defines it more specifically as produced skilful and unskilful volition (*āyuhitā kusalākusala-cetanā*).

39. *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 138, 142; *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 158–9. In the context of rebirth in the *kāmadhātu* the *Visuddhimagga* and *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā* appear to take *kamma-nimitta* as solely referring to past sense-objects perceived through the mind-door; a present sense-object perceived through one of the five sense-doors seems to be added as a fourth kind of object in addition to *kamma*, *kamma-nimitta* and *gati-nimitta*. *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 27 (Nārada, *Manual of Abhidhamma*, 268), however, states that a *kamma-nimitta* may be past or present and may be perceived at any of the six doors. This suggests that *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha* is taking this fourth kind of object as a kind of *kamma-nimitta*. This also seems to be the position of *Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, 147, following Ānanda's *Mūlaṭīkā*.

40. M. Nārada, *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, 182: *dvāra-vimuttānañ ca pana paṭisandhi-bhavaṅga-cuti-saṅkhātānaṃ chabbidhaṃ pi yathā-sambhavaṃ yebhuyyena*

96/3

of object is restricted to cases of beings taking rebirth in one of the unpleasant or pleasant realms of the *kāma-dhātu*. In such cases a being may see where he or she is about to go; this kind of object is not regarded as some conceptual symbol of one's destiny but is classified as a present sense-object perceived at the mind-door; in other words, it is truly an actual vision of the place one is headed for. Again what seems to be envisaged is that this vision is an occasion for and object of a wholesome or unwholesome consciousness process as appropriate.

Stripped of its technicalities, what this Abhidhamma account of what happens in the mind at the time of dying seems to be saying is this: the last consciousness process of a given life operates in principle as a kind of summing up of that life; whatever has been most significant in that life will tend to come before the mind. Moreover, what comes before the mind at this point is what will play the principal role in determining the nature of the subsequent rebirth. This is not an altogether surprising way for Buddhist texts to be viewing the matter. What is interesting, however, is that it makes clear a number of things about the basic understanding of the role and nature of *bhavaṅga* in Theravāda Buddhist psychology—things that seem to me to be incompatible with the view of *bhavaṅga* offered by Steven Collins. A *bhavaṅga* consciousness is directly conditioned by the last active consciousness moments of the immediately preceding life; those last active moments are a kind of summing up of the life in question. So a being's *bhavaṅga* itself represents a kind of summing up of what he or she did in his or her previous life; in crude terms, it represents a kind of balance sheet carried over from the previous life detailing how one did.

Bhavaṅga, Dhammas and Classification

Having considered how *bhavaṅga* is understood as a kind of resultant consciousness that establishes the general nature of a being, I now want to show that it is essentially *bhavaṅga* that also defines a being as a particular individual. That this is so follows, I suggest, from the way in which the Abhidhamma classifies *citta*, and the status of these classifications. We have seen how various of the standard eighty-nine classes of *citta* given in the developed Abhidhamma may perform the function of *bhavaṅga* for different classes of being. The important thing to register fully here is that we are dealing with *classes* of consciousness. What I want to suggest here is that the texts intend one to understand that any particular instance or occurrence of *citta* is in fact unique, but will inevitably fall into one of the eighty-nine classes. That this is so may not be exactly explicit in the texts but it surely must follow from the way in which the Abhidhamma describes and uses the various schemes of classification. This is an exceedingly

bhavantare cha-dvāra-gahitaṃ paccuppannam atītaṃ paññatti-bhūtaṃ vā kammaṃ kamma-nimittaṃ gati-nimitta-sammataṃ ālambanaṃ hoti.

important point that goes to the very heart of the question of what a *dhamma* is, but which is nevertheless not always fully appreciated in contemporary scholarly discussion:

> "[T]he 75 dharmas are meant to provide an exhaustive taxonomy, a classification of all possible types of existent. For example, there is a dharma called 'ignorance' (*avidyā*). There is not just one uniquely individuated momentary occurrence of ignorance. Instead, the dharma 'ignorance' refers to a theoretically infinite set of momentary events, all sharing the same uniquely individuating characteristic and all sharing the same kind of inherent existence. Dharmas are therefore uniquely individuated, marked off from all other possible events, not in the sense that there can be no other momentary event sharing the individuating characteristic of a given momentary event, but rather in the sense that each and every momentary event within a particular set of such events is marked off from each and every momentary event within every other possible set. And there are (according to the Vaibhāṣikas; other schools differ) only 75 such sets, each containing a theoretically infinite number of members. Finally, the conclusion follows that *every member of a given set must be phenomenologically indistinguishable from every other member since all share the same essential existence and the same individuating characteristic. They can be distinguished one from another only in terms of their spatio-temporal locations.*"[41]

What is at issue here is Griffiths' final conclusion. Whether or not Griffiths thinks that this should apply to Buddhist accounts of the nature of a *dharma*, whatever the school, is not entirely clear, but his reference to other schools giving different lists suggests that he does. There are no doubt important differences between the Vaibhāṣika and Theravādin conceptions of the nature of a *dharma/dhamma*. However, while I cannot argue the case fully here, it seems to me that the same considerations that show that Griffiths' conclusion does not work for the Theravādin conception of a *dhamma* should also apply in the case of the Vaibhāṣika conception.

What is quite explicit in Theravādin discussions of *dhammas* is that they did not regard every instance of a particular *dhamma* as phenomenologically indistinguishable from every other instance. Thus according to the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, the *dhamma* of "one-pointedness of mind" (*cittass' ekaggatā*) occurs in a number of different classes of consciousness, but it is not always appropriate to term this *dhamma* "faculty of concentration" (*samādhindriya*); the reason for this is

41. P.J. Griffiths, *On Being Mindless*, 53–4 (my italics).

that sometimes the *dhamma* is too weak to warrant the name.[42] Again, if we compare the first class of wholesome sense-sphere *citta* with the first class of wholesome form-sphere *citta*—the kind of *citta* that constitutes the attainment of the first *jhāna*—we find that in terms of which *dhammas* are present and contributing to the two classes of consciousness there is absolutely no difference between the two; thus, if Griffiths were right there would be no grounds for making what is a basic distinction between sense-sphere consciousness and form-sphere consciousness. The distinction must be made on the grounds of some sort of difference in the quality and/or intensity of the various *dhammas* present. In fact, Buddhadatta tells us that *cetasikas* associated with sense-sphere consciousness themselves belong to the sense-sphere, while *cetasikas* that are associated with form-sphere consciousness themselves belong to the form-sphere.[43] In the *Visuddhimagga* Buddhaghosa makes the following comment with regard to the *dhamma* of "recognition" (*saññā*):

> "Although it is single from the point of view of its own nature by reason of its characteristic of recognising, it is threefold by way of class: wholesome, unwholesome and indeterminate. Therein that associated with wholesome consciousness is wholesome, that associated with unwholesome consciousness is unwholesome, and that associated with indeterminate consciousness is indeterminate. Indeed, there is no consciousness disassociated from recognition, therefore the division of recognition is the same as that of consciousness."[44]

In other words, *saññā* associated with unwholesome consciousness is one thing and that associated with wholesome consciousness quite another; indeed, *saññā* associated with one class of the eighty-nine classes of consciousness is one thing, that associated with a different class is another.

What is clear then is that a given instance of any one kind of *dhamma* is certainly not to be considered as phenomenologically indistinguishable from any other instance. Rather the quality and intensity of what is essentially (i.e., from the point of view of its own nature or *sabhāva*) the same *dhamma* can vary considerably—possibly even infinitely if we take into account very subtle variations.[45] In other words, the finite list of *dhammas*, at least as far as the Theravādin Abhidhamma is concerned, is simply a list of classifications for mental and physical events. Thus to say of something that it is an instance of the *dhamma* of *saññā*, is to say that it is a mental event of the type that falls into the broad class of *saññā*-type events. It is certainly not to say that all events of that class are phenomenologically indistinguishable, for within the class of *saññā*-type events are subdivisions: some instances of *saññā* are *vipāka*, others are not; furthermore some instances of *vipāka-saññā* are *kāmāvacara*, others may be *rūpāvacara* or *arūpāvacara* or even *lokuttara*; some instances of *kāmāvacara-vipāka-saññā* may be *kusala-vipāka*, others not; and so on. The point is that these various qualities must be understood as in some sense inherent to the very nature of any *actual* instance of a *dhamma*, and they, in addition to spatio-temporal location, distinguish that particular instance from other instances.

The principle I am trying to illustrate is absolutely fundamental to Theravādin Abhidhamma. It is difficult to see just how, without it, it can distinguish the basic eighty-nine classes of consciousness in the way it does, for these distinctions are certainly not all based upon the principle of which *cetasikas* are present and which absent. Again, it is important to grasp that the division into eighty-nine classes of consciousness is by no means final or absolute. The further division of the transcendent classes into forty is common in the texts, giving a total of 121 classes. But it is clear that the texts just regard the division into eighty-nine or 121 as the basic scheme for practical purposes of exposition. The *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* seems deliberately to introduce more variables to produce ever more complex divisions in order to avoid too fixed a view of things. Thus, Buddhadatta in the *Abhidhammāvatāra*, which follows the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* much more closely than the later introductory manual, the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, states that though in brief there are eight kinds of actively wholesome

42. See *Atthasālinī*, 262–4. There are many examples one could give of this principle: *adosa* is only to be classified as *mettā* in certain types of consciousness; *tatramajjhattatā* is only to be classified as *upekkhā* in certain types of consciousness. Again, the *dhammas* covered by such groupings as the *bojjhaṅgas* *maggaṅgas*, etc., are only to be designated as such in certain circumstances. The distinction between the otherwise identical lists of the *indriyas* and *balas* is made by reference to their relative strengths or intensity in both the Theravādin and Vaibhāṣika systems. The notion of *adhipati* only makes sense if the strength of *dhammas* can vary. See R.M.L. Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening: A Study of the Bodhipakkhiyā Dhammā*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1992, 85–7, 141–5, 156–60, 315–7, 306–7, 338–9.

43. *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 16: *tattha kāmāvacara-citta-sampayuttā kāmā-vacarā. Ibid.*, 22: *rūpāvacara-citta-sampayuttā rūpāvacarā ... eva rūpa-avacara-kusala-cetasikā veditabbā.*

44. *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 130. Buddhaghosa makes the same point with regard to other *dhammas* of the aggregate of *saṅkhāras* at *Visuddhimagga*, XIV, 132. Buddhadatta comments that in the context of unwholesome consciousness, *vitakka*, *viriya*, and *samādhi* are to be distinguished as wrong thought (*micchā-saṅkappa*), wrong effort (*micchā-vāyāma*) and wrong concentration (*micchā-samādhi*) (*Abhidhammatthavibhāvinīṭīkā*, 24).

45. One of the clearest examples of distinctions being made between different instances of essentially the same *citta* is in the case of dream consciousness. The same wholesome and unwholesome *cittas* occur in dreams as in waking consciousness, but when they occur in dreams, although they still constitute wholesome and unwholesome *kamma*, it is only very feeble *kamma*, thus one does not have to worry about committing *pārājika* offences in one's dreams. See *Vibhaṅgaṭṭhakathā*, 408.

sense-sphere consciousness, if other variables are taken into account there are 17.280 kinds.[46] What are the implications of this for the understanding of the nature of *bhavaṅga* consciousness? If there are 17.280 possible varieties of actively wholesome consciousness, it follows that the corresponding eight classes of resultant consciousnesses might similarly be further subdivided to give 17.280 classes. The kinds of *citta* capable of performing the function of *bhavaṅga* for human beings and the *devas* of the *kāma-dhātu* thus become more variable. What I want to suggest then is that the Abhidhamma texts understand their schemes of classification along the following lines: any given momentary occurrence of consciousness (i.e., assemblage of *citta* and *cetasika*) is understood as falling into one of eighty-nine broad classes as a result of taking into account a number of variables; if further variables are taken into account the number of possible classes increases, and the scheme of classification becomes more complex and sophisticated. Not all the variables involve black and white distinctions, some involve distinctions of degree; if all possible subtle variations were taken into account the possible classes of consciousness would be infinite; in fact any actual occurrence of consciousness consisting of an assemblage of associated *citta* and *cetasika* is unique: although it may be very similar in many respects to some other occurrence, it is not *quite* like any other. What I am claiming is that Abhidhamma systems of classification work in much the same way as other systems of classification. Modern biology classifies life by way of phylum, class, genus, species, and so on without any suggestion that any given instance of a species will, apart from spatio-temporal location, be indistinguishable from other instances of the same species. My conclusion then is that the Abhidhamma intends us to understand that the *bhavaṅga* consciousness for any given being is unique to that individual: it is the specific result of a unique complex of conditions that can never be exactly replicated. However, the principle that each actually occurring consciousness is to be regarded as unique does not fully apply in the case of *bhavaṅga*, since, for a given being, *bhavaṅga* is something of a constant throughout a being's life; it constantly reproduces itself. Thus I think that in the case of the *bhavaṅga*, the momentary occurrences for a given individual being are intended to be understood as phenomenologically indistinguishable: i.e., the *bhavaṅga* a being experienced at the time of rebirth is phenomenologically indistinguishable from the one he or she will experience at the time of death.

Bhavaṅga, Behaviour and the Ālaya-vijñāna

We have found that *bhavaṅga* is regarded in the texts as most immediately the result of the last active consciousnesses of the previous life, and that these

46. *Abhidhammāvatāra*, 4, v. 27: *sattarasa-sahassāni dve satāni asīti ca | kāmāvacara-puññāni bhavantī ti viniddise ||.*

consciousnesses are in turn seen as a kind of summing up of the life in question; *bhavaṅga-citta* is then itself the most significant aspect of that previous life encapsulated in a single consciousness. Appropriate to this view of the matter, Buddhaghosa discusses the workings of *bhavaṅga* in the process of death and rebirth in the context of dependent arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) in order to illustrate how the *saṅkhāras* (conditioned by ignorance) of one life give rise to the third link in the chain, namely *viññāṇa*, understood as the first moment of consciousness in the next life.[47] So *bhavaṅga* is the basic mentality a being carries over from a previous life. Moreover, *bhavaṅga* is a complex *citta* with one specific object, and which constantly recurs throughout a being's life.

The fact that the Abhidhamma uses the notion of *bhavaṅga* to define both the nature of a given being and also what constitutes a lifetime as that being suggests that *bhavaṅga* is being used to explain not merely the *logic* of continuity but also why a particular being continues to be that particular being throughout his or her life, rather than becoming some other being—to become another being is to change one's *bhavaṅga*. Thus, why I do not suddenly start behaving like an animal is because I have what is essentially a human *bhavaṅga*. In other words, the notion of *bhavaṅga* is, in part at least, intended to provide some account of why I am me and why I continue to behave like me; it is surely intended to give some theoretical basis for observed consistency in behaviour patterns, character traits and the habitual mental states of a given individual.

The Theravādin Abhidhamma system is in certain respects rather skeletal: we are given bare bones which are not entirely fleshed out. The logic of certain details of the system is not always immediately apparent, but the obvious care and ingeniuity that has gone into its working out should make us wary of attributing the quirks to muddled thinking. One of the questions that needs to be asked about *bhavaṅga* is why it is said to occur *between* every consciousness process. Why *bhavaṅga* is said to occur in deep dreamless sleep is obvious: without it there would be a hole. But it is not obvious that there is a hole in ordinary waking experience that needs filling with *bhavaṅga*. Why not simply run the consciousness processes together? Why say that between every consciousness process one returns to this quite specific state of mind? It does not seem possible to answer this question exactly, but reflecting on it in the light of what I have argued above about *bhavaṅga* makes it clearer what the texts are claiming: that in between every active consciousness process one, as it were, returns momentarily to the basic state of mind that defines who one is, before emerging from that state into active consciousness once more. Thus, according to the principles of the twenty-four conditions (*paccaya*) as elaborated in the *Paṭṭhāna*, the *bhavaṅga*

47. *Visuddhimagga*, XVII, 133–45.

state of mind must be understood as conditioning in various ways a being's every response to the world around him or her. Although passive in so far as it is a *vipāka*, the *bhavaṅga* mind, like all *dhammas* and assemblages of *dhammas*, will inevitably condition other *dhammas* and assemblages of *dhammas* by way of certain of the twenty-four conditional relations. There is a sense then in which the *bhavaṅga* can be seen as a deeper level of the mind that acts on our conscious mind. Ordinary waking experience is thus presented in the Abhidhamma as a kind of dialogue between one's essential nature (*bhavaṅga*) and various external stimuli. However, even reference to the intricacies of the *Paṭṭhāna* is unlikely to answer all our questions.

While it is clear that *bhavaṅga-citta* is understood as the mechanism that carries certain mental effects from one life to the next, it does not seem possible on the basis of what is said explicitly in the texts to justify the claim that *bhavaṅga* carries with it *all* character traits, memories, habitual tendencies, etc. If we take the case of a human being taking rebirth by means of one of the four sense-sphere *vipāka-cittas* that have all three wholesome motivations, this is to be understood as a rebirth that is essentially the result of wholesome *kamma*. However, such a human being will not only have the capacity to perform wholesome *kamma*. That is to say, according to the principles of Buddhist thought as usually understood, such a being will also have brought with him from previous lives certain unwholesome latent tendencies (*anusaya*), certain as yet uneradicated defilements. But the *bhavaṅga-citta* in question is wholesome resultant. In what sense can we talk about unwholesome tendencies being carried over from one life to the next by a wholesome resultant kind of consciousness? This brings one up against one of the basic problems of Buddhist thought. If consciousness is understood to consist of a temporal series of consciousness moments each having an individual object, then when an ordinary being (*puthujjana*) is experiencing wholesome consciousness, what at that moment distinguishes him or her from an *arahant*? In other words, in what sense do the unwholesome tendencies and defilements still exist for that being? The answer is, of course, in the sense that they *might* arise at any moment. That is to say, they exist potentially. But where—or perhaps how—do they exist potentially? This is clearly a problem that historically Buddhist thought was well aware of. The Sarvāstivādin account of *dharmas* existing in the the past, present and future, the Sautrāntika theory of *bīja*, and the Yogācārin "store consciousness" (*ālaya-vijñāna*) all address this question in one way or another. The problem was how to answer the question whilst at the same time preserving perhaps the most fundamental principle of Buddhist thought: the middle way between annihilationism and eternalism.

Curiously, the Theravādin Abhidhamma seems not to articulate an explicit answer to the question, yet it is surely inconceivable that those who thought out

the traditions of Abhidhamma handed down to us by Buddhaghosa, Buddhadatta and Dhammapāla had not thought of the problem. What would those ancient *ābhidhammikas* have said? Is the answer to the problem deliberately left vague so as to avoid getting entangled in annihilationism and eternalism? The notion of *bhavaṅga* as explicitly expounded in the Theravādin Abhidhamma seems certainly intended to provide some account of psychological continuity. It is clearly getting close to being something that might be used to give some explanation of how latent tendencies are carried over from one life to the next and where they subsist when inactive. To understand *bhavaṅga* in such terms is not necessarily to assimilate it to the twentieth century notion of the unconscious. It is, however, to attribute to it some of the functions of the Yogācārin *ālaya-vijñāna*. Indeed, Louis de La Vallée Poussin some sixty years ago and E.R. Sarathchandra some thirty years ago suggested that the notion of *bhavaṅga* bears certain similarities to the *ālaya-vijñāna*,[48] and it is this, as much as the modern idea of the unconscious, that has probably influenced contemporary Theravādin writers in their expositions of *bhavaṅga*. While assimilating *bhavaṅga* to the *ālaya-vijñāna* may be problematic, it is not entirely unreasonable to suggest that both conceptions ultimately derive from a common source or at least a common way of thinking about the problem of psychological continuity in Buddhist thought. As Lance Cousins and Lambert Schmithausen have pointed out, Vasubandhu cites the notion of the *bhavāṅga-vijñāna* of the Sinhalese school (Tāmraparṇīya-nikāya) as a forerunner of the *ālaya-vijñāna*.[49] A full comparative study of *bhavaṅga* and the

48. Sarathchandra, *op. cit.*, 88–96; L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi: La siddhi de Hiuan-Tsang*, Paris, 1926, I, 178–9, 196. P. Williams sums up the nature of the *ālaya-vijñāna* as follows: "The substratum consciousness is an ever-changing stream which underlies saṃsāric existence. It is said to be 'perfumed' by phenomenal acts, and the seeds which are the result of this perfuming reach fruition at certain times to manifest as good, bad, or indifferent phenomena. The substratum consciousness, seen as a defiled form of consciousness (or perhaps subconsciousness), is personal in a sense, individual, continually changing and yet serving to give a degree of personal identity and to explain why it is that certain karmic results pertain to this particular individual." (*Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, London, Routledge, 1989, 91).

49. See L. Cousins, *op. cit.*, 22; L. Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy*, Tokyo, 1987, I, 7–8. The relevant texts are the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* §35, see É. Lamotte, 'Le traité de l'acte de Vasubandhu', *MCB*, 4, 1936, 250, and the *Pratītyasamutpāda-vyākhyā* (here the notion is ascribed to the Mahīśāsakas—see L. Schmithausen, *op. cit.*, II, 255–6, n. 68). The notion of *bhavāṅga* is not mentioned by Asaṅga in the earlier *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (which makes Schmithausen sceptical about the influence of the notion on the development of the concept of *ālaya-vijñāna*), but is added by the commentator (see É. Lamotte, *La somme du grand véhicule*, Louvain, 1938, II, 28, 8*); the notion is also cited by Hsüan-tsang (see La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, I, 178–9).

100/3

ālaya-vijñāna is beyond the scope of the present paper, but it is worth trying to take the remarks of Sarathchandra and others just a little further by briefly highlighting three significant points of contact between the two notions.[50] For the first two points, I take as a representative source Hsüan-tsang's *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* (*Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi*),

Like *bhavaṅga*, the *ālaya-vijñāna* is understood as essentially the result of previous actions which give rise to a particular kind of rebirth; in other words, it is the nature of the *ālaya-vijñāna* which determines what kind of experiences a being is destined to have.[51] Again like *bhavaṅga*, the *ālaya-vijñāna* is said to be the mode of consciousness at the time of death and rebirth; furthermore, Hsüan-tsang likens consciousness at these times to consciousness in deep dreamless sleep.[52] Finally, we have the association of both *bhavaṅga* and the *ālaya-vijñāna* with the notion of the "originally pure mind".

This notion, while not apparently developed to any great extent in early Buddhist texts, nevertheless appears to have been widespread. The classic source for the idea within the Pāli tradition is a passage from the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

> "Radiant is the mind, *bhikkhus*, but sometimes it is defiled by defilements that come from without. The ordinary man without understanding does not know it as it truly is. And so I declare that the ordinary man without understanding has not cultivated the mind. Radiant is the mind, *bhikkhus*, and sometimes it is completely freed from defilements that come from without. The noble disciple with understanding knows it as it truly is. And so I declare that the noble disciple with understanding has cultivated the mind."[53]

An equivalent passage referring to this "radiant mind" (*prabhāsvara-citta*) appears to have been well known and of some significance to a number of the ancient schools.[54] Certain later Mahāyāna traditions identify the originally pure mind of such passages with the *tathāgatagarbha*. Thus, the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* describes the *tathāgatagarbha* as amongst other things "naturally radiant, pure, originally pure" (*prakṛti-prabhāsvara-viśuddhādi-viśuddha*).[55] More significantly for our present concerns, the Sūtra goes on to identify the *tathāgatagarbha* with the *ālaya-vijñāna* and vice versa (*tathāgatagarbha-śabdasaṃśabditam ālayavijñānam, ālayavijñāna-saṃśabditas tathāgatagarbhaḥ*).[56] Of some relevance here too are Yogācārin traditions concerning the relationship of the *ālaya-vijñāna* to the so called ninth or stainless consciousness (*amala-vijñāna*). In general, according to the Yogācārin view of things, the *ālaya-vijñāna* effectively ceases at the moment of enlightenment; what remains is the stainless consciousness—consciousness from which all defilements and stains have gone. In short, the stainless consciousness is the consciousness of a Buddha. Its precise relationship to the *ālaya-vijñāna* seems to have been something of a moot point among Yogācārin thinkers, some preferring to regard it as in essence something different from the *ālaya-vijñāna*, while others viewed it as in essence not different from the *ālaya-vijñāna*, but rather the *ālaya-vijñāna* freed from all stains—in other words, the *amala-vijñāna* should be regarded as the *ālaya-vijñāna* of Buddhas.[57]

In the light of all this, the fact that the Theravādin commentarial tradition unequivocally states that the radiant mind of the *Aṅguttara* passage is *bhavaṅga-citta* is surely of some significance, and adds weight to the suggestion that the notions of *bhavaṅga-citta* and *ālaya-vijñāna* have some sort of common ancestry within the history of Buddhist thought.[58] The *Manorathapūraṇī* explanation of how *bhavaṅga* comes to be termed defiled is worth quoting in full since to my knowledge it has hitherto received no scholarly comment:

> "*Defiled*: It [i.e., *bhavaṅga-citta*] is called defiled is what is said. How come? It is like the way in which parents, teachers or preceptors who are virtuous and of good conduct get the blame and a bad name on account of their unvirtuous, ill-behaved and unaccomplished sons, pupils or colleagues when they do not reprimand, train, advise or instruct them. This is to be understood by way of the following equivalents: *bhavaṅga* consciousness should be seen like the virtuous parents, teachers and pre-

50. On the question of whether or not the *ālaya-vijñāna* has objects, see P.J. Griffiths, *op. cit.*, 95–6.

51. L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, I, 97–8: "Il est *vipākaphala*, le 'fruit de rétribution' des actes bons ou mauvais qui projettent une existence dans une certaine sphère d'existence, dans une certaine destinée, par une certaine matrice."

52. *op. cit.*: "Le Sūtra dit que, à la conception et à la mort, les êtres ne sont pas sans pensée (*acittaka*) ... La pensée de la conception et de la mort ne peut être que le huitième *vijñāna* ... En ces deux moments, la pensée et le corps sont 'hébétés' comme dans le sommeil sans rêve (*asvapnikā nidrā*) et dans l'extrême stupeur."

53. Aṅguttara-nikāya, I, 10: *pabhassaraṃ idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ taṃ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ. taṃ assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti. tasmā assutavato puthujjanassa citta-bhāvanā natthī ti vadāmī ti. pabhassaraṃ idaṃ bhikkhave cittaṃ taṃ ca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi vippamuttaṃ. taṃ sutavā ariya-sāvako yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti. tasmā sutavato ariya-sāvakassa citta-bhāvanā atthī ti vadāmī ti.*

54. In particular, the Mahāsāṃghika, the Vibhajyavāda and the school of the *Śāriputrābhidharma*; see A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du petit véhicule*, Saigon, 1955, 67–8, 175, 194; É. Lamotte, *L'enseignement de Vimalakīrti*, Louvain, 1962, 52–3.

55. II §28, Nanjio ed., Kyoto, 1923, 77; cf. Lamotte, *L'enseignement de Vimalakirti*, 54.

56. VI §82, Nanjio, ed., 221–3.

57. P. Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 92–3.

58. *Manorathapūraṇī*, I, 60; cf. *Aṭṭhasālinī*, 140.

ceptors; their getting a bad name on account of their sons and so on is like the originally pure *bhavaṅga* consciousness's being called defiled because of defilements which come at the moment of impulsion on account of consciousnesses that are accompanied by greed and so on, and whose nature is attachment, aversion and delusion."[59]

Here the commentary maintains that strictly *bhavaṅga* remains undefiled; it is only called "defiled" by virtue of its giving rise in some way to unwholesome consciousnesses. That *bhavaṅga* is seen as in some sense begetting or producing unwholesome consciousness at the moment of impulsion is in itself instructive and of some relevance to our present concerns. The point is further underlined by the *Aṭṭhasālinī* when it comments, with reference to *bhavaṅga*'s being termed "clear" (*paṇḍara*), that "in the same way as a stream that flows from the Ganges is like the Ganges and one that flows from the Godhāvarī is like the Godhāvarī, even unwholesome consciousness is said to be clear because of its flowing from *bhavaṅga*".[60] The images used by the commentators here—active consciousness is like the children or pupils of *bhavaṅga*, or like a stream that flows from *bhavaṅga*—at least suggest that they understood there to be some kind of continuity between *bhavaṅga* and active consciousness, some kind of *influence* exerted by *bhavaṅga* on active consciousness. However, the mechanism of this influence is not spelt out. In fact, the commentarial treatment here seems to raise more questions than it answers. For example, in the case of beings reborn in the "descents" where *bhavaṅga* is always unwholesome resultant, how can it be said to be defiled in name only and not truly defiled? In what sense is it pure, clear or radiant?

While certain questions remain concerning the precise functioning of *bhavaṅga* in the Theravādin Abhidhamma, I hope to have shown in this paper that *bhavaṅga* is most definitely not to be understood merely as a kind of "mental blank" and "logical stop-gap". For any given being *bhavaṅga* consciousness represents a mental province where at least certain characteristics unique to that individual are located (although the spatial metaphor is not the one

59. *Manorathapūraṇī*, I, 60: *upakiliṭṭhan* [sic] *ti. upakiliṭṭhaṃ nāmā ti. kathaṃ. yathā hi sīlavanto vā ācāra-sampannā mātā-pitaro vā ācariyupajjhāyā vā dussīlānaṃ durācārānaṃ avatta-sampannānaṃ puttānaṃ ceva antevāsika-saddhivihārikānaṃ ca vasena attano putte vā antevāsika-saddhivihārike vā na tajjenti na sikkhāpenti na ovadanti nānusāsanti ti avaṇṇaṃ akittiṃ labhanti. evaṃ sampadaṃ idaṃ veditabbaṃ. ācāra-sampannā mātā-pitaro viya hi ācariyupajjhāyā viya ca bhavaṅga-cittaṃ daṭṭhabaṃ. puttādinaṃ vasena tesaṃ akitti-lābho viya javana-kkhaṇe rajjana-dussana-muyhana-sabhāvānaṃ lobha-sahagatādi-cittānaṃ vasena uppannehi āgantukehi upakkilesehi pakati-parisuddhaṃ pi bhavaṅga-cittaṃ upakkiliṭṭhaṃ nāma hoti ti.*

60. *Aṭṭhasālinī*, 140: *tato nikkhantattā pana akusalam pi gaṅgāya nikkhantā gaṅgā viya godhāvariṭo nikkhantā godhāvarī viya ca paṇḍaraṃ tveva vuttaṃ.*

preferred by the texts). Moreover this mental province exercises a certain determinative power over conscious mental states. While it is perhaps something of a misconceived exercise to speculate on whether this understanding of *bhavaṅga* had a direct and explicit influence on the development of the Yogācārin notion of the *ālaya-vijñāna*, it surely must be the case that these two concepts are to be understood as having a certain affinity and that they belong to the same complex of ideas within the history of Buddhist thought.

The 'Five Points' and the Origins of the Buddhist Schools

L.S. Cousins

1. The historical background

The history of Buddhism in India between the death of the founder and the beginning of the Suṅga period is remarkably little known. Apart from the account of the first two communal recitations (*saṅgīti*) or Councils and a certain amount of information relating to the reign of the Emperor Aśoka, we are largely dependent upon traditional Buddhist accounts of the origin of the eighteen schools. As Frauwallner has commented: "These accounts are late, uncertain and contradictory, and cannot be relied upon blindly".[1] The number eighteen is probably symbolic in nature and should perhaps not be taken too seriously. Nevertheless it is clear that there is a generally accepted tradition that in the course of the second and third centuries after the Buddha's *mahāparinibbāna* the *saṃgha* divided into a number of teacher's lineages (*ācariyakula*)[2] or doctrines (*vāda*;[3] *ācariyavāda*[4]) or fraternities (*nikāya*).[5] At a later date these terms became in effect synonymous, but this may well not have been the case earlier.

In the early centuries AD the Sinhalese commentators and chroniclers assembled the data available to them and constructed a consistent chronology of the early history of Buddhism and of the kings of Magadha. The absolute chronology which they created has not proven acceptable as it places the reigns of the Mauryan Emperors Candragupta and Aśoka more than sixty years too early. However, the general account they provide has been reconciled with other data, mainly from the *Purāṇas*, to create a widely accepted chronological framework for the history of India during this period. For our purposes, the essential points of this account are that the accession of Aśoka occurs in 218 BE and all eighteen schools were already

1. E. Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, Rome, 1956, 5.
2. e.g. Kv-a 2-3.
3. e.g. Dīp V, 51.
4. e.g. Kv-a 3.
5. *Ibid.*

in existence by 200 BE.[6] This we will call the 'long chronology', to use a convenient term of Lamotte's.[7]

A number of works of Sarvāstivādin origin (and later works influenced by them) date the accession of Aśoka to 100 BE. In fact it seems clear that during the early centuries AD the Vaibhāṣika commentators attempted to create a chronological framework for the early history, probably using a version of the Aśoka legend as their starting point. Of course, many of the Sanskrit texts simply give isolated statements, which could not be called a chronology. However, we do possess a work on the doctrines of the eighteen schools which does go some way towards achieving a unified framework. This is a treatise attributed to Vasumitra, extant in three Chinese and one Tibetan translation. In fact the verses naming the author as the 'bodhisattva Vasumitra' are absent from the earliest Chinese translation (beginning of the fifth century AD) and were clearly added in India at a later date. The first translation would hardly have failed to mention his name, if its attribution to one of the famous figures of Sarvāstivādin history bearing the name of Vasumitra had been known at the time. Probably it is a work of the third or fourth centuries AD. For our purposes the essential points to note are that for Pseudo-Vasumitra divisions begin during the reign of Aśoka in the second century BE.[8] By the end of the second century the Mahāsāṅghikas had eight new branches but the Sthaviras were still undivided. During the course of the third century BE nine new branches of the Sthaviras emerge and the Sautrāntikas arrive in the fourth century BE. This we will call the 'short chronology'.

The difference between the two chronologies is rather considerable. According to the long chronology all eighteen schools existed eighteen years before the accession of Aśoka. According to the short chronology divisions among the Sthaviras do not begin until 100 years after the accession of Aśoka. We do not know whether other major schools than the Theravādins and the Sarvāstivādins had created their own chronologies. The *Śāriputraparipṛcchā*, a Mahāsāṅghika work translated into Chinese between AD 317 and 420, follows more or less the same chronology as Pseudo-Vasumitra.[9] Bhavya preserves various traditions which may be old, but it seems dangerous to rely on material only collected as late as the sixth century AD.

6. Dīp V, 53; Kv-a 3.
7. E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, Louvain, 1958, 14-15.
8. Later translations mention 116 BE, but it seems clear that originally the work, like the *Dīpavaṃsa*, specified only the century. See A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra", *JA*, 1954, 236ff.
9. E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 310; 587-8; A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, Saigon, 1955, 17.

A number of scholars have expressed doubts as to whether we can still accept a version of the long chronology as authoritative.[10] At present it does not seem possible to decide the question. Here only a few of the relevant issues can be addressed, since our concern is to examine the nature of the earliest divisions in the Buddhist community and of the earliest schools of thought. However, some points cannot be avoided entirely. One of our earliest sources relates the first schism of all to the second communal recitation — usually known as the Council of Vaiśālī.

2. The Council of Vaiśālī

An account of the first two communal recitations is contained in all surviving recensions of the *Vinayapiṭaka*. We possess one version in Pāli, parts of two in Sanskrit, one in Tibetan and five in Chinese. There is also a summary of the *Vinaya* of the Haimavata school in Chinese.[11] This material has been conveniently collected in French by Hofinger.[12]

The date of the events described is given as 100 BE in the Pāli *Vinaya* and in the *Vinayas* of the Mahīśāsakas, Dharmaguptakas and Haimavatas. These schools are closely related as regards their *Vinayas*.[13] The *Vinayas* of the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins give the date as 110 BE. No doubt this divergence is due to a wish to reconcile the account of the second communal recitation with the tradition found in Sarvāstivādin works that the accession of Aśoka took place in 100 BE.[14] The rather brief account in the Mahāsāṅghika *Vinaya* gives no date at all. In any case it seems likely that the figure of 100 years was known in the last centuries

10. E.J. Thomas, "Theravādin and Sarvāstivādin Dates of the Nirvāṇa", *B.C. Law Volume*, Part II, Poona, 1946, replied to by J. Filliozat, "Les deux Aśoka et les conciles bouddhiques", *JA*, 1948, 189-95; E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 13-15, however, adopts the long chronology as a working hypothesis; H. Bechert's several recent articles: "The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered", *IT*, 1982, 29-36, "A Remark on the Problem of the Date of Mahāvīra", *IT*, 1983, 187-90, *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha — das älteste fest stehende Datum der indischen Geschichte?*, Göttingen, 1985, "Remarks on the Date of the Historical Buddha", *Buddhist Studies*, 1988, 97-117.
11. According to E. Mayeda,"Japanese Studies on the Schools of the Chinese Āgamas", in H. Bechert, *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, Göttingen, 1985, 101, most Japanese scholars take this to be a Dharmaguptaka work. A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 201ff. suggests Kāśyapīya which seems plausible.
12. M. Hofinger, *Étude sur le concile de Vaiśālī*, Louvain, 1946, usefully criticized by P. Demiéville, "A propos du concile de Vaiśālī", *TP*, 1951, 239-96.
13. M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 167; E. Frauwallner, *The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature*, 55.
14. The Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins is well known to have been revised at a late date, while the portion of the Sarvāstivādin Vinaya which contains the account of the councils is an addition translated at a later time — P. Demiéville, "A propos du Concile de Vaiśālī", 242ff. See also P.H.L. Eggermont, "New Notes on Aśoka and his Successors, II", 88, and H. Bechert, *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha*, 160.

BC, whether or not it is original. This would still be far earlier than most of our historical information for the early period.

One hundred years is a round figure, and was almost certainly not intended as an exact count of years. It is more interesting to examine the accounts of the event to see what they tell us as to its likely dating. What is immediately striking is the paucity of claims to direct connection with Buddha.[15] Yet even as late as 60 BE there would have been monks in their eighties who would have received *upasampadā* in the lifetime of the Buddha (even perhaps some in their seventies who were novices at a young age). Given the emphasis upon seniority in the *saṅgha*, such monks would have played a major role (ceremonially even if not in fact) and their connection with the Buddha would have been mentioned in all extant accounts. They are not mentioned. We can assume therefore that the second communal recitation did not take place much before about 70 BE.

On the other hand every account we have emphasizes the connection with Ānanda (except the Mahāsāṅghika).[16] The very brief Mahāsāṅghika account is however one of the few to claim a direct relationship with the Buddha. At the very least it seems likely that in the original version the presiding monk (very probably the oldest living monk)[17] was specifically claimed to have been a pupil of Ānanda. No early tradition survives as to the date of the death of Ānanda, but it seems reasonable to suppose that he might have lived until around 20 BE.[18] In this kind of context being a pupil of Ānanda does not necessarily involve a long period of contact. In his old age Ānanda would no doubt have been the head of a large group of monks and even the pupils of his pupils would have had Ānanda as their nominal teacher so long as Ānanda was still alive.

At the traditional date (taken literally) of 100 BE it would just about be possible for the most senior monk alive to be reckoned a pupil of Ānanda — he would have to be an active centenarian. A date ten or so years earlier would be more likely. In the form in which we have the tradition, however, it is quite impossible — a whole group of active centenarians is not believable! A group of active octogenarians is certainly possible — we are after all dealing with a group of elders selected precisely because of their age.[19]

15. M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 26, 146, 147 and also the list of years of *upasampadā* on page 124. Only the Mahīśāsaka and Mahāsāṅghika accounts in fact make such a claim.
16. M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 27, 48, 50, 51, 57, 80, 92, 93, 99, 101, 133, 139, 140, 143.
17. *Paṭhaviyā saṃghatthero* — see M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 90-93.
18. According to Th 1039-43 Ānanda attended the Buddha for 25 years. He could not, therefore, have been less than 45 years old at the time of the *parinibbāna*.
19. It might be argued that life expectancy would have been lower at the time. However, we are dealing with a group of individuals who are teetotal, non-smoking and celibate. They would have had plenty of exercise and would usually be regarded as noncombatants in situations of conflict. Data on life expectancy from Egypt in the early centuries AD suggest a 50% mortality rate for each decade of life after

What emerges from this is that a date of around 70-80 BE is implied by the accounts as we have them.[20] Two further points should be noted. Firstly, the early traditions do not mention the name of the king, presumably because it was of no interest and because he played no special role in these events. Secondly, all the early accounts (including that of the Mahāsāṅghikas) leave us to understand that the decisions taken were accepted by all parties.

3. The First Schism

The earliest accounts we have of the first schism in the Buddhist order are quite late. Even by the short chronology we are speaking of sources between four and six centuries subsequent to the event. By the long chronology we could be dealing with sources no earlier than eight centuries after. The earliest source is possibly the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, which is posterior to Kaniṣka in date.[21] However, the relevant passage is absent from the earliest translation into Chinese of this work.[22] It could therefore be a later addition made in India. This account claims that the first schism was the result of doctrinal controversies over the 'Five Points' advanced by a monk named Mahādeva.[23] Let us note that Mahādeva is not named *in this context* in any other early source and is therefore not certainly named before the fifth century AD — nearly a thousand years later (by the long chronology)!

Pseudo-Vasumitra, also a Sarvāstivādin source, likewise attributes the schism to doctrinal disputes over 'Five Points'. The earliest Chinese translation refers to three monks named Nāga, Pratyaya (?) and Bahuśruta. The Tibetan translation is similar. The two later Chinese translations refer to four groups of monks.[24] This is clearly related to a later passage from a work attributed to Bhavya (sixth or seventh century) which attributes the schism to a worthy monk (unnamed or named Bhadraka), subsequently supported by two learned (*bahuśruta*) Elders named

adolescence, but this would be for the general population. See N. Lewis, *Life in Egypt under Roman Rule*, 54. Even the later Dīp IV 50, 52; V 23 claim that they had all 'seen the Tathāgata' is not entirely ruled out. A small child could well have been taken to 'see the Tathāgata' at a very young age and told about the event when it was older. As late as 80 BE the oldest monk alive would very likely have some such memory.
20. This line of thought was first suggested to me by Richard Gombrich, but my conclusions differ slightly from his. See R. Gombrich, "The History of Early Buddhism: Major Advances since 1950", *Indological Studies and South Asian Bibliography — a Conference*, Calcutta, 1986, 17.
21. E. Lamotte, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, Louvain, 1944, 111n.
22. P. Demiéville, "A propos du concile de Vaiśālī", 263n.
23. E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 303ff.
24. A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva", 1954, 236; *Les premiers conciles bouddhiques*, 98ff. See also E. Lamotte's *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 302, and E. Frauwallner, "Die buddhistischen Konzile", 243ff.

Nāga(sena) and Sthiramati (according to Bu-ston Valguka).[25] Tāranātha infers from the contents of the subsequent list of the propositions attributed to the different schools that this is a tradition of the Sammitīya school.

The same source (quoted by Bhavya) dates these events to 137 BE under the kings Nanda and Mahāpadma and mentions that the work of the Elder Vātsīputra took place in 200 BE. This date for the origins of the Pudgalavāda is too late in terms of the long chronology, but reasonably compatible with the short chronology which dates the beginning of divisions among the Sthaviras to 200 BE. The first date is more in line with the long chronology. Probably the Sammitīyas had their own chronology.

By contrast the Sinhalese tradition knows nothing of a doctrinal cause for the first schism. The oldest source is the *Dīpavaṃsa* which probably dates from immediately after the reign of Mahāsena when its account ends. This would be early fourth century AD.[26] It traces the origin of the schism to the defeated party at the second communal recitation and is followed in this by later Sinhalese chronicles.[27] Noticeably, however, Buddhaghosa does not give an account of the origin of the eighteen schools in the *Samantapāsādikā*. The commentary to the *Kathāvatthu* does.[28] Its account is closely related to that in the *Mahāvaṃsa*, but also quotes the *Dīpavaṃsa* in full. This strongly suggests that no account of the 'eighteen schools' was preserved in the commentarial tradition of the Mahāvihāra.

This can also be inferred from the *Dīpavaṃsa*. The first part of Chapter V is given a separate title *Ācariyavāda*. It contains the account of the schools preceded by an account of the first two communal recitations or *dhamma* recensions (*saṃgaha*). Since Chapter IV had already given an account of these it is obvious that the *Dīpavaṃsa* is drawing on a second older source, presumably in Sinhala Prakrit. We can go further than this. That older source has clearly taken a list of schools of northern origin and added to it an introduction giving an account of the two communal recitations based on the Mahāvihāra commentarial tradition. That it is a list of northern origin emerges clearly from its close relation to the lists given

25. A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinitadeva", 1956, 172; C. Vogel, "Bu-ston on the Schism of the Buddhist Church and on the Doctrinal Tendencies of Buddhist Scriptures", in H. Bechert, *Zur Schulzugehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, Calcutta, 1984, 104.
26. AD 274-302 (G.C. Mendis, "The Chronology of the Early Pāli Chronicles of Ceylon", *UCR*, 1947, 54). Mendis, following Paranavitana, rejects the notion that an era based on 483 BC was known in ancient Ceylon. H. Bechert, "The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered", 32, agrees but R. Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism*, London, 1988, 141n., prefers to retain the traditional dating of Wickremasinghe (followed by Geiger). For Mahāsena this would give dates of 334-361/2.
27. Dīp V 30 ff; Mhv V 3-4; Mhbv 96.
28. Kv-a 2-5.

by Pseudo-Vasumitra and the *Śāriputraparipṛcchā*.[29] In fact it is possible to infer that it derives from a Sarvāstivādin original, probably mediated by a Mahīśāsaka source.

The reason this can be inferred is that the first schism in the Theravāda is attributed to the Mahīśāsakas from whom the other divisions descend. This is the position where one would expect the Sarvāstivādins who are found conversely in the position where one would expect the Mahīśāsakas (i.e. in close connection with the Dharmaguptakas). The list gives details of minor Sarvāstivādin branches such as the Suttavādins and clearly lacked information on the later Mahāsāṅghika schools of Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa. On the other hand the Sinhalese were well aware of the Andhakas. Their views are often referred to in the commentary to the *Kathāvatthu*. There is inscriptional evidence of the presence of the Sinhalese school at Nāgārjunikoṇḍa in the third century AD.[30] One of Buddhaghosa's sources is an *Andhakaṭṭhakathā*.[31]

In these circumstances it is easy to understand why the list of schools given in *Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā* does not relate very well to the attributions given in the body of that very text. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Ceylon texts add a further list of six Indian schools.[32] These do relate to the *Kathāvatthu* and are obviously based upon the Mahāvihāra commentary to that work. We may note the mention of schools such as the Rājagirikas and the Siddhathikas, hardly mentioned in Indian literature but known from inscriptions at Amarāvati. Even more suggestive is the presence of the otherwise unknown Vājiriyas.[33] It is not then surprising that *Kathāvatthu* Commentary often feels the need to add the word *etarahi* 'nowadays' when it attributes particular views to particular schools.[34]

Like the Ceylon tradition, the eclectic *Śāriputraparipṛcchā* gives a list of the eighteen schools of northern origin. It too knows nothing of a first schism due to discussion of doctrinal points. Neither, however, does it describe the origin of the Mahāsāṅghikas as deriving from the defeated party at the second communal recitation. Rather it sees the Mahāsāṅghikas as the conservative party which has

29. A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 16ff.
30. *EI*, XX, 22.
31. E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1946, 12; K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1983, 121-2.
32. Dīp V 54; Mhv V 12-13; Kv-a 5; Mhbv 97; cf. Kv-a 52.
33. Probably the later term *Vetullaka* has been substituted for them in the extant version of Kv-a, just as the term *Vetulyavāda* (Mhv XXXVI, 41) replaces the earlier *Vitaṇḍavāda* (Dīp XXII 43-44).
34. *Etarahi* occurs throughout *vaggas* 2 and 3, predominates in *vaggas* 1 and 4 and peters out in *vagga* 5. Apart from one occurrence in the eighth *vagga* it does not occur again except in *vaggas* 17 and 18 where it is always applied to the Vetullakas. This may be because one is intended to take it as read after the first few *vaggas*. Alternatively, it is possible that the original information available for these did not make sense and so the commentator has substituted a reference to the contemporary situation

preserved the original *Vinaya* unchanged against reformist efforts to create a reorganized and stricter version.[35] Like the *Dīpavaṃsa* it sees the origin of the name partly in a council where the Mahāsāṅghikas were in the majority and their opponents included many senior monks. This must however be largely a myth based upon a folk etymology. Clearly the Mahāsāṅghikas are in fact a school claiming to follow the *Vinaya* of the original, undivided *saṅgha*, i.e. the *mahāsaṅgha*. Similarly the *theravāda* is simply the traditional teaching, i.e. the original teaching before it came to be divided into schools of thought.[36] The *Dīpavaṃsa* makes this clear when it explicitly identifies the term *theravāda* with the term *aggavāda* in the sense of primal teaching.[37]

We have then two accounts of the origins of the first schism. The first is of Sarvāstivādin origin. Known from two sources of around the third and fourth centuries AD and in many later sources based on these, it attributes the origin to doctrinal disputes over the 'Five Points'. The second is of Theravādin and Mahāsāṅghika origin. Known from two sources of around the third and fourth centuries AD, and in many later sources based on these, it attributes the origin to *Vinaya* issues. It is obviously important to examine carefully the evidence for the content of the doctrinal disputes. As we shall see, it is very much earlier in date than the evidence for the 'eighteen schools'.

4. The 'Five Points'

The most detailed account we have of the 'Five Points' is contained in a canonical Pāli text, the *Kathāvatthu*. Traditionally this work is attributed to Moggaliputta Tissa in the reign of Aśoka, i.e. the latter part of the third century BC. Although some scholars have supported the traditional view, it is in fact clear that it is not a unitary work in the form in which we have it.[38]

If the authenticity of the Ceylon tradition that the Canon was closed in the first century BC is accepted, then even the latest portions would not be subsequent to the first century BC. This cannot in any case be far wrong. The *Kathāvatthu* on the one hand contains arguments against some Mahāyānist or proto-Mahāyānist notions and on the other clearly does not know the developed Mahāyāna. A good example would be the assertion in one of the final sections of the *Kathāvatthu* that Buddhas stand in all directions.[39] The supporter of this view denies that they are in any of the recognized heaven realms but is not able to name any such Buddhas

35. E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 189.
36. So M i 164-5.
37. Dīp IV 13; V 14.
38. K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, 103-5; E. Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien IV", *WZKS*, 1972, 124.
39. Kv 608-609.

when challenged to do so. Such an argument would not have been possible once the developed Mahāyāna literature was known.

We can in any case be certain of an early date for the oldest portions of the *Kathāvatthu*. The first *vagga* (known as the *mahāvagga*) discusses mainly but not exclusively the views of the 'person' and of *sabbam atthi* 'all exists'; it contains a number of anomalous linguistic forms.[40] These are not quite absent in the remaining *vaggas* but relatively few. Norman has convincingly established that these cannot be due to influence from Sinhala Prakrit but must be of North Indian origin.[41] He has also suggested that there was originally a dialect difference between the two speakers in the framework of the *puggalakathā* (the first portion of the first *vagga*).

This gains support from the fact that a canonical Sarvāstivādin *abhidharma* work, the *Vijñānakāya*, devotes its first two chapters to defending the doctrine of *sarvam asti* and criticizing the notion of the *pudgala* - the same two topics that we find in the *mahāvagga* but in reverse order.[42] In the first chapter the opponent of *sarvam asti* is named as Maudgalyāyana (Mou-lien). As was pointed out by La Vallée Poussin, this must refer to Moggaliputta Tissa, the author of the *Kathāvatthu*.[43] The earliest portion of the *Kathāvatthu* is then likely to date from the third century BC or very soon thereafter.

It is worth noting at this point that this suggests a three-way split. Party A would oppose both the *puggala* and *sabbam atthi*. Led by Moggaliputta they would be Vibhajyavādins and ancestors of the Ceylon tradition among others. Party B espouses *sarvam asti* and opposes the doctrine of the 'person', preferring its own teaching referred to by the *Vijñānakāya* as *śūnyatāvādā*. They would be the ancestors of the Sarvāstivāda. Party C would be the Pudgalavādins who presumably rejected the doctrine of *sarvam asti*. This three-way split gains some support from a Pāli commentarial passage which treats *puggalavāda* and *suññatavāda* as extremes to be avoided.[44] In any case it is not clear whether these were yet distinct fraternities *(nikāya)* or merely schools of opinion. Nor is it clear what the relationship of these three schools would be to the Mahāsāṅghikas.

40. Māgadhisms outside the *puggalakathā* are particularly prominent at Kv 119-120 and 159-162 i.e. in discussions related to *sabbam atthi*.
41. K.R. Norman, "Māgadhisms in the *Kathāvatthu*"; also K.R. Norman, "Pāli and the language of the heretics"; cf. H. Bechert, "Über Singhalesisches im Pālikanon", 71-75.
42. Louis de La Vallée Poussin, "La controverse du temps et du pudgala dans le Vijñānakāya", *EA*, 1925; F. Watanabe, *Philosophy and its Development in the Nikāyas and Abhidhamma*, Delhi, 1983, 174ff., and next.
43. *Kośa*, (= *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, tr. L. de La Vallée Poussin), I, xxxiv; so also E. Frauwallner, "Die buddhistischen Konzile", *ZDMG*, 1952, 258.
44. Mp ii, 309-10.

The very next section of the *Kathāvatthu* deals precisely with the 'Five Points'.[45] This portion of the text must also be quite early. It seems to represent a genuine debate with a real opponent. The tone of it is still very similar to the *mahāvagga*. It is probably part of the original core of the text. Even if not, it cannot plausibly be dated later than the second century BC.

It is a matter of some surprise that most scholars have in fact given more weight to much later accounts than to the actual content of the *Kathāvatthu* itself. Let us note that by the short chronology the relevant portions of the text would be close in time to the original disputes. Even by the long chronology they would only be a century or so later. This contrasts sharply with sources belonging to the commentarial period some five centuries later. Moreover, such sources mostly represent a genre of literature which handed down supposed views of different schools in short statements. Out of context in this way they are subject to error and reinterpretation. In some instances it is quite clear that this has been the case. Such works do not constitute a good source for the understanding of controversial points. Wherever possible, these must be understood in their original context, that is to say in the actual *abhidhamma* literature itself.

It is by no means clear that most of the views we are given as sectarian views were ever the positions of clearly defined schools. Many of them are surely constructed dilemmas, intended as debating points to sharpen understanding of the issues. They could never have been the cause of serious sectarian division. It is much more probable that they, like much else in the canonical *abhidhamma*, are simply the distant ancestors of the dialectic of the Mādhyamikas.

5. The 'Five Points' in the Kathāvatthu

The thing that stands out most clearly about the treatment of this subject in the *Kathāvatthu* is that it is closely related to the earlier discussion as to whether an arahat can fall away. The same structure is applied to each of the first four points as is applied in the earlier discussion. The parallel is so close that it is difficult to doubt that they are part of one and the same discourse.[46] The view that an arahat

45. First identified by La Vallée Poussin, "The 'Five Points' of Mahādeva and the Kathāvatthu", *JRAS*, 1910, 413-23. See also on the 'Five Points': P. Demiéville, "Les versions chinoises du Milindapañha", *BEFEO*, 1924, 60-62; "L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'après Paramārtha", *MCB*, 1932, 30-40; "À propos du Concile de Vaiśālī", *TP*, 1951, 262ff.; E. Lamotte, "Buddhist Controversy over the Five Propositions", *IHQ*, 1956, 148-62; J. Nattier and C. Prebish, "Mahāsaṃghika Origins", *HR*, 250-257; A. Bareau, "Les controverses relatives à la nature de l'arhant", *III*, 1957, 241-50.

46. Compare even Kv 69-70 with 195 for the fifth point but mainly Kv 79ff. with 168ff., 175, 182, 189ff. (ten *kilesas*); 85-86 with 169, 175-6, 182, 190 (*bodhipakkhiya-dhammas*, followed by a stock phrase on the arahat); 86ff. with 170-2, 176-8, 182-4, 190-2 (*samayavimutta/asamayavimutta* parallelled by *sadhammakusala/para-*

can fall away is standard in the Sarvāstivāda and the orthodox Vaibhāṣika position on the subject is recounted at length by Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharmakośa*.[47] The *Kathāvatthu* is clearly criticizing a very similar position, i.e. one in which the arahat, never-returner and once-returner can fall away, but the stream-enterer cannot. The opponent in the *Kathāvatthu* and the Vaibhāṣika both support their case by reference to the obscure distinction between the *samayavimutta* and the *asamayavimutta*.

The context in which we should see the 'Five Points' is then that of the *abhidhamma* debates which refine the interpretation of some of the more recondite points of *suttanta* teaching. We shall see that such a context gives little support to notions which see the 'Five Points' as involving some kind of downgrading of the arahat as against a Buddha. This is not the issue. If there is a downgrading, it is rather a devaluing of the arahat who has not developed the *abhiññā*.

6. The arahat has doubt

The simplest of the 'Five Points' to understand is certainly the proposition that the arahat has doubt. The first thing to notice is how remarkable this proposition is. It is a frequent declaration of the *suttanta* literature that the stream-enterer has overcome doubt. So basic is this notion that the statement that an arahat has doubt must be intended to startle. In fact when the argument is examined in detail it is clear that it has been carefully constructed in order to generate a challenging proposition.

In the first place, the word used for doubt is *kaṅkhā*. Now this is just slightly less specialized in its usage in the earlier literature than the more technical *vicikicchā*. It is immediately agreed by both parties that the arahat does not have either *vicikicchā* or *kaṅkhā* in the technical sense of doubt as to Teacher, Dhamma, Saṅgha, etc. It is equally agreed by both parties that an arahat may be in doubt as to name and family, as to right and wrong roads and as to ownership of grass, wood and trees, but cannot be in doubt as to the four fruitions *(phala)*. In this restricted sense the proposition cannot really be disputed; so an initially counter-intuitive thesis achieves the aim of both stimulating the hearer and sharpening the understanding. Clearly all that is at issue is at most a terminological question, if

dhammakusala); the parallelism continues with citations from *suttanta*. This structural similarity is badly obscured by the translation.

47. *Kośa*, VI, 56-65, etc.; cf. A. Bareau, "Les controverses relatives à la nature de l'arhant", 244; it does not seem that this can be a Mahāsāṅghika view since they appear to have held the reverse thesis that it is the stream-winner and not the arahat who can fall away. It is just possible that Pudgalavādins could be meant here.

that. It is significant that the *Satyasiddhiśāstra* gives a parallel account of the nature of doubt.[48]

Of special interest is the distinction made between an arahat skilled in his own *dhamma* (*sadhammakusala*) and an arahat skilled in *paradhamma*. Only the latter is free from doubt in both senses. The commentary is probably right to equate this to the distinction between *paññāvimutta* and *ubhatobhāgavimutta*. In this context that is equivalent to the distinction between an arahat without higher knowledges *(abhiññā)* and one who has developed such abilities. Interestingly this is not a standard term in the Pāli *abhidhamma* and appears to be drawn from the terminology of the opponent.

7. The arahat has ignorance

Hardly less surprising is the proposition that an arahat has ignorance. Here again a slightly less specific term — *aññāṇa* is used for ignorance rather than the more usual technical term — *avijjā*, but the conclusions are practically identical. In fact the whole course of the discussion is on the same lines as in the case of doubt.

A number of scholars have followed the *Mahāvibhāṣā* in interpreting this as referring to unafflicted (*akliṣṭa*) ignorance.[49] It is perhaps worth noting that this, if correct, would situate the discussion very much in the context of the Sarvāstivādin tradition. Such a terminology is absent from the Pāli *abhidhamma* literature. Of course the substantial point is very similar. However, the *Jñānaprasthāna* appears to have understood that an arahat could be ignorant as to his own liberation.[50]

8. Paravitāraṇā

This is the fourth proposition in all the extant lists. *Paravitāraṇā*[51] can mean:

A. induction of comprehension by others;
B. induction of investigation by others;
C. being made to overcome by others;
D. being made to complete by others.[52]

48. N.A. Sastri, *Satyasiddhiśāstra of Harivarman*, Baroda, 1978, II, 288ff. Ki-tsang gives a similar interpretation: P. 32, but the *Jñānaprasthāna* appears to apply it to doubt on the part of arahats as to their own liberation *(ibid.)*.
49. P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 32n.; E. Lamotte, "Buddhist Controversy over the Five Propositions", 148; Nattier and Prebish, *op. cit.*, 253.
50. P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 35 n.
51. One MS has *parivitāraṇā*. Some such reading is probably the source of Bhavya's interpretation: 'la connaissance parfaite' — A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva", *JA*, 1956, 173.
52. See PTC s.v. *tīraṇa* and *tīreti* as well as *Pāli-English Dictionary*, s.v. *vitarati*. Some of these senses are more plausible in the *abhidhamma* context. Later interpreters have tended to take the primary Sanskrit meaning of 'crossing over'; cp. also *tiṇṇā kaṅkhā* D ii 276; 279; 281-3.

One suspects that a deliberate wordplay of the kind so frequent in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* is intended.[53] The *Kathāvatthu* seems to take it in the first two senses. The context[54] suggests sense C which recalls the notion of *kaṅkhāvitaraṇa* 'overcoming doubt'.[55] It is clear that the variations in the translations of Pseudo-Vasumitra, etc. are simply the different options. The *Jñānaprasthāna* probably had the same term as the *Kathāvatthu*.[56]

Again we have a superficially startling notion. The whole point of being an arahat is to have an independent knowledge of truth such that no assistance would be required from others. Note that this is the first point raised in the *Kathāvatthu* and the opponent immediately concedes that an arahat is not dependent on another and does not lack wisdom in the sense of knowledge of the Buddhist path.

In fact each of the four senses given above requires *abhidhamma* analysis. Sense A is true if what is meant is comprehension of mundane information. It is false if what is meant is the liberating knowledge. Sense B is false if what is meant is the arousing of insight since the arahat must have active wisdom at the time of realization. It would be possible, however, to argue that someone might attain arahatship, but not label their experience: 'this is arahatship'. If the question were raised, they would be able to identify it.[57] It is also possible to argue that not all *ariyas* would have the relevant reviewing knowledge.[58] Indeed this would be generally agreed for stream-enterers (cf. the story of Mahānāma); some would only be able to identify themselves as stream-enterers after being told the relevant criteria and investigating to establish the absence of doubt, etc.

Sense C, however, implies the existence of arahats who can only overcome defilements after a stimulus from someone else and sense D implies arahats who can only complete the path, etc. after such a stimulus. The need for such a stimulus (*parato ghoso*) is of course standard for stream-enterers and reasonably widely exemplified for arahats.[59] It would, however, be felt in the Theravādin *abhidhamma* and other *ekābhisamaya* schools that the individual concerned was not

53. Paṭis is certainly another text of this formative period. See A.K. Warder's introduction to Paṭis tr.
54. The second of the 'Five Points' is precisely *kaṅkhā* in the *Kathāvatthu*. Most other sources reverse the order of the second and third points, which means that *kaṅkhā* immediately precedes *paravitāraṇā*. This may be earlier, but one late source, Vinītadeva follows the Pāli order — A. Bareau, *op. cit.*, 194. It is also possible that the verse cited by Pseudo-Vasumitra, etc. has changed the order for metrical reasons (see n.71 below).
55. Cf. Paṭis ii, 63.
56. P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 32n..
57. *ibid.*, 39-40.
58. This would not be acceptable in later Theravāda, since all arahats are held to have reviewing of defilements abandoned (in contradistinction to *sekhiyas* who need not), cf. Vism 676ff.
59. P. Masefield, *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism*, Colombo, 1986, collects the data on this.

yet an arahat — he would perhaps have experienced the ordinary (*lokiya*) path of arahatship but not yet the transcendent (*lokuttara*) path. Such a view would be more appropriate to an early version of the gradualism of the Sarvāstivāda.[60]

It is perhaps significant that the final point made in the *Kathāvatthu* is an acknowledgement that arahats are not made to comprehend the (fruit of) arahatship by others. La Vallée Poussin[61] is misleading here. The opponent *accepts* this point. No-one is arguing that an arahat can be mistaken as to his fruition. This possibly implies a school in which experience of *magga* is not necessarily immediately followed by the *phala*. Again, I suggest, an early version of *anupūrvābhisamaya*.[62]

In the seminal article in which he identified the 'Five Points' in the *Kathāvatthu*, La Vallée Poussin offers three possible translations of 'Points' 2-4. The third, which he considers, to be "probably (?) the original meaning of Mahādeva", is: "being ignorant and subject to doubt, an arhat ought to receive instruction". To my mind, this is unfortunate. La Vallée Poussin's article has been extremely influential and widely followed — in particular in his view that the "general import seems to be a strong depreciation of the arahats". In fact the other two translations which he offers are more to the point. The first refers simply to acquiring mundane information while the second is the case of an arahat unaware of his arahatship who "gets certitude from the asseveration of another".

What we have here is a constructed dilemma which clarifies the distinction between the knowledge of *dhamma* which every arahat must have and the more mundane knowledges of name and family, etc. which are only known to some arahats. There is no depreciation of arahats as such, here. At most it is only arahats without higher attainments and higher knowledges who are being (slightly) depreciated. Why then did La Vallée Poussin think there was? Partly it must be because of relying on the accounts associated with the name of Mahādeva — accounts which we now know to be late and probably subsequent to the period of conflict between Mahāyāna and the early schools which seems to have occurred around the third century AD.[63] Even more important was his interpretation of the first of the 'Five Points' to which we must now turn.

9. *Parūpahāra*

Unusually there are two terms given for the first 'Point' in the *Kathāvatthu*. In the *uddāna* we find *parūpahāra*. This, in isolation rather cryptic expression, is found

60. Prior to the development of the theory of the *nirvedhabhāgiyas* which contains elements of a synthesis with *ekābhisamaya* views.
61. "The 'Five Points' of Mahādeva and the Kathāvatthu", 420.
62. Item 9 in the same *vagga* of the *Kathāvatthu*.
63. This is attested both for Ceylon (e.g. Mhv XXXVI 41; 111-2) and for Central Asia. See Z. Tsukamoto, *A History of Chinese Buddhism*, Tokyo, 1985, index s.v. Hinayāna, Khotan, Kucha, etc.

also in Pseudo-Vasumitra. Demiéville[64] points out that the different Chinese translations must derive from different interpretations of the term.[65] The earliest translation and also the Tibetan translation interpret it in the sense of 'providing'. Bhavya clearly had the same word but the Tibetan translators appear to have resolved the compound as 'providing for another' instead of being 'provision by another'.[66] Unfortunately both Lamotte and Bareau have chosen to follow Hsüan-tsang and translate this point as "the arahat can be seduced by others".[67]

In the body of the text of the *Kathāvatthu* the proposition is put at first as "an arahat has emission of impure seminal fluid". Demiéville renders the *Jñānaprasthāna* version as: "Il y a chez l'Arhat, molesté par le dieu Māra, émission d'impureté". Just as with the other 'Points' the proposition is very startling. The question of the emission of semen is extremely important in the *Vinaya* literature and hence in the practical life of the *bhikkhu*. It is discussed there not infrequently and the emphatic statement in the *Mahāvagga*[68] that it cannot occur that an arahat's semen would be released would have been well-known.

La Vallée Poussin suggested that the notion here is that of a succubus. The *Kathāvatthu* refers to the opponent's claim that divinities of the Māra class (*Mārakāyikā devatā*) bring about the arahat's emission of seminal impurity. The *Jñānaprasthāna* also attributes this to the activity of Māra. According to Paramārtha, Mahādeva claimed that all bodily outflows (tears, phlegm, etc.) in an arahat are the work of Māra.[69] The same source attributed to Mahādeva a *sūtra* in which occurs the statement: "Le roi Māra et ses femmes divines, afin de faire déchoir l'*aśaikṣa*, souillent d'impureté son vêtement...". What is important to note is that no source claims that this could occur as a result of a dream. Of course it is suggested that a dream occurred in the case of Mahādeva, but this is precisely because he is, according to the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, a false arahat. Arahats do not dream.

The key to the interpretation of this passage lies in the presentation of the opponent's argument at the end.[70] The *Kathāvatthu* often allows the opponent to make a telling point near the end of the discussion. Here the point made is that others may provide (*upasaṃhareyyuṃ*) the five requisites; therefore there is *parūpahāra* for an arahat. This is textually slightly clumsy as it stands. The reason

64. P. Demiéville, "L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'après Paramārtha", 31n.
65. See also A. Bareau, *op. cit.*, 242 n.
66. A. Bareau, *ibid.*, 172n. The second list in Bhavya (*ibid.* 174) and Vinītadeva must be interpreting *upahāra* as 'providing teaching'.
67. So E. Lamotte, "Buddhist Controversy over the Five Propositions", 148; cf. A. Bareau ("Les controverses relatives à la nature de l'arhant", 242) "séduit par autrui"; A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 216 '...an *arahat* may have erotic dreams due to visitations by goddesses'.
68. Vin i 295.
69. P. Demiéville, "L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'après Paramārtha", 35.
70. Kv 172.

is clear. In the 'Five Points' as they originally stood what was asserted was the proposition that an arahat can be provided (with material things) by others. This is obviously closely analogous to the provision of mundane information as envisaged in the following 'Points'. As we have seen, it is precisely this original proposition which is preserved by Pseudo-Vasumitra and Bhavya, undoubtedly because it was enshrined in a verse.[71]

The *Kathāvatthu* and *Jñānaprasthāna* have focussed on what they see as the weak point in the opponent's argument in a kind of *reductio*. One may guess that there really was a *sūtra* in which Māra was depicted as doing some such thing. This would not be so far out of line with some of the other things Māra is shown as doing in the Canon. The logic is after all clear: deities can provide the requisites for monks.[72] If supernatural beings can create food and robes for arahats, then they can create other things. If so, Māras can create undesirable things. We have a *sutta* to support this.

It is interesting to see how the *Kathāvatthu* seeks to oppose the point. Initially it establishes agreement that arahats do not have passionate attachment *(rāga)* and implies that seminal emission is appropriate only for those who do. Then it seeks to establish the origin of the seminal fluid produced by deities of the Māra class. The opponent agrees that it is not from those deities nor the arahat's own nor from other people. Deities and arahats do not have seminal emissions in the ordinary way. If from other people, how does it get into the body? The opponent agrees that it is not provided through the pores of the body. This rules out either a source from other human beings or a creation by those deities outside the body.

The question is then asked why these deities do this, and we learn that it is in order to produce doubt (*vimati*). It is established that this is not doubt in the Teacher, etc. Presumably, then, it is some kind of mundane doubt. This topic is then left — presumably because it will be taken up in discussion of the subsequent 'Points'. Then we return to the question of the origin of the seminal fluid. The point to note is that Māras are Paranimmitavasavattin deities — they have power over the creations of others, they do not merely create. The opponent is clearly working on the basis of traditional Indian medicine in which seminal fluid (*sukka*) is one of the seven elements beginning with chyle *(rasa)* into which food is successively transformed. The objection is raised that not all who eat have emissions of seminal fluid (e.g. boys, eunuchs and deities). It is also objected that

71. The first line must be, in Middle Indian form, something comparable to:
parūpahāro aññāṇaṃ / kaṅkhā paravitāraṇā //
Note that this requires the change in the order of the second and third 'points'. Compare Sp iv, 874. (See notes 76 and 84 below.)

72. M i 243: deities offer to introduce food by means of the pores of the body (*dibbaṃ ojaṃ...sjjhoharevyyuṃ*); cp. later the *chibhikkhūpasampadā*.

the case of excretion is not analogous, since there is no reservoir *(āsaya)* for seminal fluid as there is for digested food.[73]

All this seems a little out of harmony with the next section which is an *abhidhamma* style 'circulating discourse'. First it is established that an arahat has completely and utterly made an end of passionate attachment. Then the same is established for each of the other nine *kilesas*. Next it is established that the path has been brought into being in order to abandon passionate attachment (*rāgappahānāya maggo bhāvito*). The same is then established one by one for each of the other six sets which make up the *bodhipakkhiyadhammas*. This whole process is then gone through one by one for each of the other nine *kilesas* (which include both delusion and doubt). A fine mnemonic chant! What is its purpose? The answer must be, to emphasize the thoroughness with which an arahat has accomplished his task in order to counter the suggestion that an arahat may fall away.

What follows is a quotation emphasizing the qualities of the arahat. Then comes the distinction between the two kinds of arahat. Then the whole process involving the ten *kilesas* and the seven sets applied to each of the ten is applied to the two arahats. In fact a *catuṣkoṭi* is employed in each case to point out the oddity of the proposition. It is this circulating discourse which recurs for the next three 'Points' and is found in very similar form in the earlier discussion of an arahat's falling away.

10. The original form of the 'Five Points'

Analysis of the *Kathāvatthu* gives, then, clear evidence of a historical development in the materials from which it is composed. We can divide this into three phases.

Phase One is the development of a literature consisting of constructed dilemmas. Of course, some of these were probably very old but a fashion, as it were, for them would be associated with the rise of *abhidhamma*. They would not really be a radical departure of any kind, just a stimulating formulation for purposes of clarification. It is material of this sort which has been used as the basis for many of the *kathāvatthūni* 'points for discussion'. No doubt, too, they continued to be composed.

Phase Two would be slightly later than, but overlapping with, *Phase One*. This would be the period of the three-way doctrinal discussions between Pudgalavādins, Sarvāstivādins and Vibhajyavādins. It is just these three schools for whom we have a coherent doctrinal structure emerging from the early period *and no others*.[74] In

73. See J. Jolly, *Indian Medicine*, Poona, 1951, 65 for the list of the seven reservoirs, which does not include one for *sukka*.

74. For the Pudgalavāda, see now P. Skilling, "The Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛta-Viniścaya of Daśabalaśrīmitra", *BSR*, 1987, 3-23, and T.T. Chau, "Le personnalisme du Bouddhisme ancien", *ICO*, 1973; "The Literature of the Pudgalavādins", *JIABS*, 1984, 7-16; "Les

this period, however, we must certainly think in terms of schools of thought rather than separate, organized sects. In the *Kathāvatthu* this would be evidenced by the *Puggalakathā* and the sections in the early chapters dealing with the Sarvāstivāda.[75]

The original version of the 'Five Points', if it was originally a set of five, would be:

a. provision by others *(parūpahāra)*
b. lack of knowledge *(aññāṇa)*
c. uncertainty *(kaṅkhā)*
d. induction of comprehension/investigation by others *(paravitāraṇā)*
e. the arahat falls away *(parihāyati arahā)*.[76]

This would be a mnemonic for the following argument. There are certain individuals who attain a temporary liberation. They require an external stimulus. How do we know that arahats of any kind may require external aid? It is agreed that they can receive material aid from others. Equally they can be in doubt as to the correct road to take on a journey and can lack knowledge of mundane things. In such cases they require external information if they do not have psychic powers. Similarly certain individuals can momentarily achieve arahatship but external confirmation or an external stimulus to stabilize their achievement is required if they do not have sufficient concentration.

Phase Three in the development of the *Kathāvatthu* would represent a subsequent reshaping in a changed historical situation. The northern Sarvāstivādin tradition has receded from awareness. Its centres in Kashmir, Gandhāra and Mathurā are far away. Contact now is with the Mahāsāṅghika traditions further south. It is to this period that we should attribute the work of Mahādeva. Pseudo-Vasumitra describes the origin of three schools as due to the work of Mahādeva.[77]

réponses des Pudgalavādin", *JIABS*, 1987, 33-53 as well as K. Venkataramanan, "Sāmmitīyanikāya Śāstra", *VBA*, 1953, 153-243, La Vallée Poussin, "La controverse du temps et du pudgala dans le Vijñānakāya"; *L'Abhidharmakośa de Vasubandhu*, ch. 9, S. Schayer, "Kamalaśīla's Kritik des Pudgalavāda". *RO*, 1932, 68-93 and my forthcoming article "Person and Self" to appear in the proceedings of the Buddhism 2000 conference (Bangkok, 1990). E. Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien III", *WZKS*, 1971, 69-121 makes plain the origin of the Sarvāstivāda as a coherent whole. For the Vibhajyavāda it is manifest in the Pāli canonical *abhidhamma*.

75. Pudgalavādin are: 1-69; 93-115; Sarvāstivādin are: 69-93; 103-9; 115-51; 212-20; 225-7; closely related are: 151-55; 159-63. If the first four 'Points' were originally Sarvāstivādin (i.e. 163-95), there can have been very little in the first two *vaggas* concerned with schools other than these two.

76. If there was originally a mnemotic verse (note 71 above), then the *pādas* of the second line might have been either:

arahā parihāyati / etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ // or
arahattā parihāni / etaṃ Buddhānusāsanaṃ //

The *Śāriputraparipṛcchā* refers to the 'school of Mahādeva' in the same context.[78] It is with the same group of schools that the *Kathāvatthu* Commentary associates the 'Five Points'. These and later schools are grouped by the *Kathāvatthu* Commentary under the name of Andhaka and it is precisely in inscriptions from Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa that we meet them.

According to the earliest translation of Pseudo-Vasumitra we should date this Mahādeva's work to the period before 200 BE. This is a short chronology work; so it must refer to a date about one hundred years after the accession of Aśoka, i.e. the early second century BC. Since Pāli sources also imply a date after the reign of Aśoka, it is probably safe to date the formation of these later Mahāsāṅghika schools to the second century BC.[79] What I wish to argue is that the *Kathāvatthu* was expanded and reshaped precisely at this time in response to ideas coming from these schools. In fact the commentary attributes the bulk of the views in the *Kathāvatthu* either to the schools it calls Andhakas or to the Uttarāpathakas. This must be a recollection of the situation at an earlier date. Probably many views originally of Sarvāstivādin origin have been transferred to the more familiar Andhakas.[80] The term 'Andhaka' itself is a reflection of Śātavāhana times.

Mahādeva would then have taken up the 'Five Points' and reformulated them for his own purposes. It is this reformulation which is evidenced in the *Kathāvatthu*. Probably it is at this stage that the first 'Point' was transformed from a simple statement that arahats can receive material aid from divinities to a claim that (some?) arahats are subject to physical interference by divinities of the Māra class. Very possibly the subsequent points were also reinterpreted in a stronger sense. What then of the fifth 'Point'?

11. The fifth 'Point'

The early Mahāsāṅghikas appear to have rejected the idea that an arahat could fall away.[81] This must be the reason why Mahādeva has changed the fifth 'Point'. It might have seemed natural simply to transfer it to the stream-enterer, but this has

78. *ibid.*

79. See Nattier and Prebish, *op. cit.*, 258-64 for the view that Mahādeva and the 'Five Points' must be associated with 'southern' Mahāsāṅghika schools.

80. A good example of this is at Kv-a 60 where the distinction between *appaṭisaṅkhā-nirodha* and *paṭisaṅkhā-nirodha* is attributed to the Mahiṃsāsakas and the Andhakas. Yet it must surely be Sarvāstivādin.

81. See A. Bareau, *op. cit.*, 244; *Les Sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 66. This seems to be what is said in Pseudo-Vasumitra, although the earliest translation differs: A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva", 243 n. Bhavya is silent, but Vinītadeva (*idem*, page 194) attributes the view that there is no falling away from either arahatship or stream-entry to the Lokottaravādins. Bareau cites the *Vibhāṣā*. Kv-a 37 attributes the view that arahats can fall away to *some* Mahāsāṅghikas. Probably this idea was admitted later in the Andhaka

not been done explicitly. Instead, other questions related to stream-entry have been taken up, which could approach the same question more obliquely.

The second *vagga* of the *Kathāvatthu* preserves two items. In fifth place we have the proposition that there could be verbal utterance *(vacībheda)* on the part of someone in a meditative attainment *(samāpannassa)*, while in sixth place we have another statement in cryptic form: *dukkhāhāro maggaṅgaṃ*.[82] Within the text of the first item we have the question: "When knowing 'suffering', does one utter the word 'suffering'?", while in the text of the second is the question: "Do all those who utter the word 'suffering' bring into being *(bhāventi)* the path?"

Bhavya has the same two items, but in reverse order, in his account of the views of the Ekavyavahārikas.[83] It is the second item which corresponds with the fifth 'Point' of the Sanskrit sources.[84] It is suitably ambiguous. At first sight it could easily be taken to mean: "the nutriment of suffering is a factor of the path" — a rather unexpected notion.[85] It could mean "evoking [knowledge of] suffering is the cause of the path", but this would not be at all controversial. What must be in fact intended is: "pronouncing [the word] 'suffering' is the cause of the path" or it could be "...is a sign of the path".[86]

Paramārtha and his interpreters preserve two explanations.[87] One is that repeating a verse can provide the stimulus required to arouse the path of stream-entry as in the case of Sāriputta. The point here seems to be that attainment of stream-entry normally requires some form of teaching from the Buddha or a

82. *Maggapariyāpannaṃ* must be an intrusion into the text of *Kathāvatthu* from the commentary.
83. A. Bareau (*op. cit.*, 174) — *dukkhahāni* has probably been translated in place of *duḥkhāhāro*, presumably a manuscript error.
84. Vinītadeva — A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva", 194 is very close. The other two occurrences in Bhavya must be related (*idem*, 173 and 188). No less than three alternative versions of it have been added in the later translations of Pseudo-Vasumitra (*idem*, p. 243). In the version of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and in the actual list of the 'Five Points' given in Pseudo-Vasumitra a version is given in which an expression meaning 'verbal enunciation' seems to have replaced 'enunciating *dukkha*'. Certainly if the *pāda* could be replaced easily by one meaning: "Ce sont là tes paroles démentes", as Ki-tsang tells us, then some word from the root *vac* must have been introduced — cf. P. Demiéville, *op. cit.*, 36). Nevertheless it seems fairly likely that the verse attributed to Mahādeva would in Pāli form be similar to:

> *parūpahāro aññāṇaṃ /*
> *kaṅkhā paravitāraṇā //*
> *dukkhāhāro ca maggaṅgaṃ /*
> *etaṃ Buddhāna (or 'ānu) sāsanaṃ //*

85. Later interpreters have ingeniously understood that suffering is the food that keeps beings alive in the *nirayas* — J. Masuda, "Origin and Doctrines of the Early Buddhist Schools", *AM*, 1925, 25n.
86. CPD s.v. *aṅga*.
87. P. Demiéville, "L'origine des sectes bouddhiques d'après Paramārtha", 32-3; 36; 40.

disciple.[88] The second explanation, derived from the *Mahāvibhāṣā*, is that the deliberate repetition of the word 'suffering' can act as the necessary impulse to arouse that path. By themselves such explanations seem fairly straightforward. What does the *Kathāvatthu* have to say?

The first thing to notice is that there are an additional three related topics. The question as to whether one can hear sounds while in an attainment[89] is closely related both conceptually and in literary form to the question as to whether one can make utterances. Similarly the question[90] as to whether the knowledge "this is suffering" occurs for one uttering the words "this is suffering" is clearly another formulation of the same issues. More interesting than either of these is a third point, which emerges when the literary form of the discussion of *dukkhāhāro maggaṅgaṃ* is examined.

The treatment of this topic is brief, but the identical form is repeated later in the second *vagga*.[91] The immediate question is: "Do all those who hear the utterance *(vohāra)* of Lord Buddha bring into being the path?" This is part of the larger question as to whether the utterance of the Lord Buddha is transcendent *(lokuttara)*. This is important and must be examined, but for now it is sufficient to note that the issue in this topic is partly the question of momentariness. Can different things go on at the same time or do they occur in a rapid, sequential process? That of course is precisely the question of *suttanta* versus *abhidhamma*.

This is the hallmark of the *Kathāvatthu's* treatment of many of the views which later tradition associates with the Mahāsāṅghikas. They are again and again criticized for over-generalizing, for lack of precision or for excessive enthusiasm.[92] Of course, the criticism is usually in the form of asking questions rather than overt criticism but it is no less real for that. This is what one would expect if the views current among them were *suttanta* formulations lacking in *abhidhamma* exactitude — a rather conservative doctrinal approach. In this context it is interesting to notice that the *Vinaya* of the Mahāsāṅghikas seems to define *abhidharma* as the ninefold *sūtrānta*.[93] This suggests that the early Mahāsāṅghikas (or some of them) may have rejected the *abhidharma* developments.

12. Mahāsāṅghika origins

If the 'Five Points' and Mahādeva were not involved in the First Schism, then we are left with *vinaya* issues as the cause. It has been realized for some time that it is

88. P. Masefield, *op. cit.*
89. Kv 572-573.
90. Kv 453-455.
91. The bottom 15 lines of p. 223 correspond very closely to the top 14 lines on p. 204.
92. A good example of the last is the irony which greets the notion of the fragrance of the Buddha's excrement (Kv 563) — "due to inappropriate affection for the Lord".
93. G. Roth, *Bhikṣuṇī-vinaya*, Patna, 1970, 248n.

unlikely that the Mahāsāṅghikas are directly descended from the defeated party at the second communal recitation.[94] They would hardly give a favourable account of their own defeat! It is of course quite possible that they, or some of them, originated in the same geographical area as the Vajjiputtakas and were associated with them in the minds of their opponents.

Human nature being what it is, it is perfectly credible that the Mahāsāṅghikas believed that they had preserved the original form of the *Vinaya* which had been altered by others. Their opponents are unlikely to have agreed. They probably felt that things had become lax and it was necessary to restore the pristine teaching. In such a dispute historians should not take sides.[95] We may be sure that each party was able to make a case for its position.

What is important is that the picture which now emerges[96] is one in which the earliest division of the *saṅgha* was primarily a matter of monastic discipline. The Mahāsāṅghikas were essentially a conservative party resisting a reformist attempt to tighten discipline. The likelihood is that they were initially the larger body, representing the mass of the community, the *mahāsaṅgha*. Subsequently, doctrinal disputes arose among the reformists as they grew in numbers and gathered support. Eventually these led to divisions on the basis of doctrine. For a very long time, however, there must have been many fraternities (*nikāyas*) based only on minor *vinaya* differences. They would have been very much an internal affair of the *saṅgha* and the laity would have been hardly aware of them. Geographical differences and personalities would have been more important than doctrine.

What then of the early schools within the Mahāsāṅghikas? According to the Sammitiya tradition preserved by Bhāvya the Mahāsāṅghikas divided into two schools, at a point subsequent to the origination of the Pudgalavāda.[97] The *Dīpavaṃsa* and other Pāli sources mention the same two schools as the first division of the Mahāsāṅghikas. The two schools concerned are the Kaukkuṭikas and the Ekavyavahārikas. A few sources connected with the North West mention a third: the Lokottaravādins. This may be due to the later prominence of that school in the area of modern Afghanistan. In fact, however, it seems likely that the Lokottaravādins and the Ekavyavahārikas are two names for the same school.

The Pāli form (Gokulika) and the various translations make it clear that three distinct interpretations of the name of the Kaukkuṭikas were current. The first gives the Pāli form, but is almost certainly an error or popular etymology based on

94. e.g. M. Hofinger, *op. cit.*, 178-9; A. Bareau, *Les premiers conciles bouddhiques*, 86ff.; C.S. Prebish, "A Review of Scholarship on the Buddhist Councils", *JAS*, 1974, 251ff.; A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Delhi, 1970, 214; G. Roth, *op. cit.*, x.

95. Nattier and Prebish, *op. cit.*, 265-70 accept the Mahāsāṅghika account too readily.

96. H. Bechert, *Zur Schulgehörigkeit von Werken der Hīnayāna-Literatur*, 20-44.

97. A. Bareau, "Trois traités sur les sectes bouddhiques attribués à Vasumitra, Bhavya et Vinītadeva", 1956, 173.

the Middle Indian form. The second interpretation explains it as connected with the Pāli *kukkula* (Skt. *kukūla*) 'a burning ember' or 'a chaff fire'. The only view that the commentary to the *Kathāvatthu* attributes to this school is that "all constructions without exception are burning embers (*kukkula*)". The *Kathāvatthu* criticizes this as an over-generalization.[98] If this is a genuine recollection of the teachings of this school, as its context in the second *vagga* might suggest, then this school could have been promulgating some teachings related to insight meditation.[99] However, this too may well be a popular etymology. Most probably the name Kaukkuṭika originated from the name of the Kukkuṭārāma[100] in Pāṭaliputra — a monastery associated in some sources with the Mahāsāṅghikas. This would be a school centred on that monastery. Possibly the connection became unfamiliar when Pāṭaliputra ceased for a while to be the effective capital of India or after some destruction in that city.[101]

We can, I think, say more about the Ekavyavahārikas. To do so, we must return to the question as to whether the utterance (*vohāra*) of the Lord Buddha is transcendent (*lokuttara*). As we saw, this is closely related to Mahādeva's new version of the fifth 'Point' in the *Kathāvatthu*'s treatment. What is also interesting is that it in fact deals with two distinct views. With the first, all utterance on the part of the Buddha is transcendent, just as "Both a heap of corn and a heap of gold can be pointed to with a golden rod".[102] For the second view, the Buddha's utterance is ordinary (*lokiya*) when he makes an utterance about ordinary things, but transcendent when he makes an utterance about transcendent things. The commentary remarks at this point that "...this is one view; it is the view nowadays of some Andhakas".

It can then be clearly understood that the Ekavyahārikas or 'One-utterancers' are so called because they held the belief that Buddhas have only one kind of utterance, i.e. a transcendent utterance. Hence too their alternative name of Lokottaravādins "those whose doctrine is transcendent" or "those who affirm the transcendent speaking (of the Buddha)". The Kaukkuṭikas on the other hand must have espoused the alternative proposition that the Buddha had two kinds of speech. This

98. Kv 208-212.

99. cf. A iii 443-444.

100. Possibly the inhabitants of that monastery interpreted its name as derived from the Māgadhī equivalent to *Kukūla*. Bhavya's first list includes mention of a school called Kurukula supposed to be another name for the Sammitīyas. This list does not include the Kaukkuṭikas; so Kurukula is probably a rendering of their name. In BHSD we also have Kurkuṭārāma.

101. This could be due to invasion, but note that the *Aśokāvadāna* and other sources attribute the destruction of this monastery to Puṣyamitra — E. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, 425-30.

seems very appropriate if we examine the two schools into which the Kaukkuṭikas appear to have divided at an early date.

The commentary does not identify any of the views found in the *Kathāvatthu* as belonging to these schools, but there is some information in later sources. Taking first the school of the Bahuśrutīyas, Pseudo-Vasumitra tells us that they distinguish between the transcendent and the ordinary teaching of the Buddha. The former consists of five words which have the power to lead out of *saṃsāra:* impermanence, suffering, emptiness, no-self and the peace of *nirvāṇa*. All other words uttered by the Buddha are his ordinary teaching. This is clearly a development of the thesis of those opposed to the 'One-utterancers'. It is not clear how their views differed from those of the second school, the Prajñaptivādins. Their name could refer to some kind of doctrine concerning 'descriptions' or 'concepts', but it is perhaps more likely in the context that it concerned the Buddha's 'making known' of some aspect of the teaching.[103]

The *Dīpavaṃsa* knows only one further school among the Mahāsāṅghikas — the Caitya school. According to the Sammitīya tradition given by Bhavya it is this school which was founded by Mahādeva. It was probably the mother school, based at Amarāvati, of the later schools which the Sinhalese know as the Andhakas.[104] The fuller form of their name means either those with a doctrine about shrines, i.e. *stūpas* or those who honour shrines.[105] The latter is supported by archaeology — the remains at Amarāvati certainly testify to an interest in *stūpa* symbolism. Pseudo-Vasumitra tells us that this school held that honouring *stūpas* does not bring much merit, which would rather support the former interpretation. Perhaps it is also relevant that there is some evidence of deprecation of the *stūpa* cult in certain of the early Mahāyāna *sūtras*.

What then is the significance of Mahādeva's, if Mahādeva it was, alteration of the fifth 'Point'? To understand this, we need to turn to another aspect.

13. The experiential dimension

As it is presented in the *suttanta* literature, the enlightenment experience is the result on the one hand of meditational practice (including devotion and study) and on the other of immediate triggering events. Traditionally, these immediate causes are expressed as the two conditions for the arising of the *ariya* path: teaching of *dhamma* by someone who has already experienced it *(parato ghoso)* and appropriate bringing to mind *(manasikāra)* on the other — the external and internal conditions

103. Compare the series at Kv 315-6 where we learn that disciples do not make known the aggregates *(khandhapaññatti)*, ...bases, ...elements, ...truths, ...faculties and ...persons.
104. E. Lamotte, *op. cit.*, 582-3.
105. Dīp V, 42; Mhv V 5; Kv-a 2; 4 indicate the Pāli as Cetiyavādā(ī). Inscriptions give both Cetiyavaṃdaka and Cetiavadaka (Lamotte, *idem*, p. 500).

114/3

which combine at an opportune moment. When such a moment arrives, the enlightenment experience can occur quite suddenly.

An individual who has had such an experience and stabilized it is an *ariya*, a person who is genuinely noble as opposed to merely noble by birth. His experience is referred to as transcendent (*lokuttara*) and when, subsequently, he acts or speaks on the basis of that experience, his speech or action are also referred to as transcendent.[106] Presumably the notion is that the experience he has had and continues to have somehow suffuses and transforms his speech. This must obviously be even more true in the case of a Buddha or an arahat.

As a description of how it should appear in practice, this is not controversial for any school of early Buddhism. The problem arises when the attempt is made to give a more exact formulation. This attempt was made in the *abhidhamma* literature. Here the mind is defined as momentary and intentional in nature; a given mental event involves the knowing by a single mind of a single object. The enlightenment experience was defined as the moment in which a transformed and hence transcendent mind, in association with the mental structuring of the path,[107] takes as its object the element *(dhātu)* which is unconstructed *(asaṅkhata)*, i.e. its basis is an experience of an aspect of reality which is uncaused and which does not construct new mental and physical events. Yet this aspect somehow acts as the support for the transformed and newly harmonious balance of mental events.

Obviously the notion of an intentional consciousness experiencing an object, which is effectively without boundaries or limits raises some philosophical problems and there are differences between the various *abhidhamma* systems precisely at this point. Fortunately these issues can be disregarded for the present purpose. The important thing to note is that in general the *abhidhamma* systems of the Vibhajyavāda and the Sarvāstivāda do not allow the simultaneous occurrence of different consciousnesses. In the present context this means that the experiences of hearing or speaking or bodily action or experiencing the *dhamma* which does not construct must all involve different objects. Speaking or hearing cannot therefore be transcendent in strict *abhidhamma* terms.

We should not misunderstand this. Seeing and hearing do not occur simultaneously in *abhidhamma* terms. Obviously, however, we seem to experience them as occurring together and in ordinary language we can speak of them as occurring at the same time. In just the same way the experience of the transcendent and sensory activity are not simultaneous. However, we could

106. M iii 74.
107. R. Gethin, "The Path to Awakening. A Study of the Thirty Seven *Bodhipakkhiya-dhammā* in the *Nikāyas* and *Abhidhamma*", Ph D thesis, University of Manchester, 1987, gives a full account of the development of the theory of the *magga* and associated ideas.

experience them in alternation as effectively occurring at the same moment. The *suttanta* way of putting things is not wrong from the *abhidhamma* perspective. It is simply that there is a more exact form of expression which is more appropriate for the development of insight.

14. The reformulation of Mahādeva

We can now return to *Phase Three* in the evolution of the *Kathāvatthu's* treatment of the 'Five Points'. There could be no objection to the proposition that repeating the word *dukkha* might sometimes act as the necessary stimulus to enlightenment and it is not obvious why the notion that its utterance might occur spontaneously at such a time would be unacceptable. Nor could the claim that the Buddha's speech was transcendent be rejected as such, especially not if it was limited to his speech on *dhamma* topics. These things can only be objected to from the *abhidhamma* point of view.

Not surprisingly, then, the *Kathāvatthu* rarely criticizes these points as such. Usually it simply attacks them as generalizations. Not everyone who pronounces the word *dukkha* immediately gains enlightenment regardless of their previous behaviour, nor even everyone who has developed insight! Quite often the typical *abhidhamma* emphasis on the impossibility of two simultaneous consciousnesses occurs.[108] What is interesting, however, is the precise position which is being commented on. The opponent is making a very specific claim. The spontaneous utterance of the word 'suffering' occurs only in one case. It does not occur in ordinary *jhāna*, whether of the form or formless realms. Neither does it occur in an ordinary path attainment (strong insight of the later terminology). Nor does it occur if the path attainment, although transcendent, is higher than the first *jhāna* in level. The commentary even understands that it is restricted to the path of stream-entry on the grounds of the denial that it occurs in all cases. However, it would seem difficult to justify this position from the text.

This restriction to the first *jhāna* is very suggestive. It immediately recalls the pure insight worker who achieves the *jhāna* level of concentration only at the moment of stream-entry and perhaps the arahat who is *paññāvimutta*. This places the reformulation of the five 'Points' firmly in the context of the distinction between the arahat skilled in *paradhamma* and the one skilled in his own *dhamma*. Probably then this too is part of Mahādeva's reformulation. There are a number of reasons why this should be so.

Firstly, it seems odd to have a difference between the case of the arahat's falling away and the other four cases. Secondly, it is easy to replace the references to *paradhammakusala*, etc. with those to *asamayavimutta*, etc. but the converse is not possible. Only the question of temporary versus non-temporary liberation is

108. See *Kathāvatthu Index* s.v. *samodhānam*.

appropriate to the issue as to whether an arahat falls away. This of course explains why the substitution could not take place in that case. Thirdly, as suggested above, this is an unfamiliar terminology. It must come from the opponent. Yet it is not, as far as I am aware, a Sarvāstivādin usage; it may very well, then, be Mahāsāṅghika. Fourthly, it suggests a later period when an emphasis on concern for others as a higher spiritual motivation is beginning to be formulated more specifically. Finally, it seems to be associated with an emphasis on the value of practising the higher *jhānas* and the *abhiññās*. This is perhaps not especially characteristic of the Sarvāstivādins.

It is certainly characteristic of the Yogācārins and it may be suggested that this may be a feature in which they were influenced by the Mahāsāṅghikas. There is some reason to believe that practice of the *jhānas* is of great antiquity[109] and the Mahāsāṅghikas, or this branch of them, may well have been conservative in this respect as well as others. Frauwallner has suggested that the Yogācārins must have taken over many of the non-Sarvāstivādin aspects of the Mahāyānist *abhidharma* system from an earlier system.[110] It would not be very surprising if that source proved to be the Mahāsāṅghikas of central India, an area that seems to have gone over to the Mahāyāna *en masse* at a relatively early date.[111]

The two key features of Asaṅga's *abhidharma* are the acceptance of the possibility of more than one consciousness at a time and the introduction of the notion of the *ālayavijñāna*. The former might very well have been part of Mahādeva's formulation, to judge by the *Kathāvatthu's* criticisms, while the latter was attributed by the Yogācārins precisely to earlier concepts of the Sinhalese school and of the Mahāsāṅghikas.[112] It would not be at all unexpected if the Vibhajyavādin concept of the *bhavaṅga* consciousness, already current in the later canonical *Abhidhamma* period, was taken over or shared in some form by their neighbours, the southern Mahāsāṅghikas.

Can we then assess precisely how and why the 'Five Points' were reformulated by Mahādeva? I think the answer is yes. His argument must have run something like this. There are two ways of practising — a selfish one in which you are concerned with getting your own enlightenment as quickly as possible and a more altruistic approach with more concern for others. In the latter case you must

109. J. Bronkhorst, *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Stuttgart, 1986.
110. E. Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien III", 103.
111. A. Bareau, *Les sectes bouddhiques du Petit Véhicule*, 296-305. However, I would not wish to rule out an association of the Madhyamaka with the Sarvāstivāda. Both schools are largely insight-orientated and Madhyamaka dialectic can be seen as emerging from *abhidharma* debate. If so, we would expect Mahāyāna literature of a Madhyamaka orientation to be of northern origin and reach China more rapidly. This does seem to be the case, but such a suggestion is speculative at present.
112. L.S. Cousins, "The *Paṭṭhāna* and the Development of the Theravādin *abhidhamma*", *JPTS*, 1981, 22; L. Schmithausen, *Ālayavijñāna*, Tokyo, 1987, II, 275, n. 52.

develop the *jhānas* and the higher attainments. There are serious snags to the selfish approach. You can be subjected to material assistance, even harassment by Māras. You can lack crucial understanding and have doubt as to your own achievement. You may also lack the information you need to help others. You would well require the aid of others in order to reach your goal or at any rate to finalize it. Because your concentration development is limited, you may need to verbalize your insight meditation in order to stimulate the necessary absorption or to compensate for the absence of teaching by another person when it is required. None of this will be necessary if you develop the *jhānas* in order to become an arahat skilled in *paradhamma*.

Clearly there must have been more to it than this. Obviously the fact that it was felt necessary to reorganize the *Kathāvatthu* treatment of the 'Five Points' indicates at the least that the old formulation had lost relevance, presumably because of the success of Mahādeva's new version. We may guess however that a more substantial development of some kind would be required. Most probably a Mahāsāṅghika (or Andhaka) version of *abhidhamma* had been created on the lines suggested above. Very probably many of its key features are recorded in the *Kathāvatthu*.

It may eventually be possible to reconstruct it but the task is formidable. The attributions of the commentary cannot be trusted without confirmation. The later literature on the schools reflects a later situation when the Mahāsāṅghikas had largely adopted the Mahāyāna. Sarvāstivādin writers may attribute Mahāyānist notions to the Mahāsāṅghikas in order to discredit one or both. Mahāyānist writers of a later date (e.g. Paramārtha) associate the two in order to show the antiquity of the Mahāyāna. Probably most later Mahāsāṅghikas believed that their particular tradition had always been Mahāyānist. It is however clear that the Mahāyāna cannot be this early.[113] That is to say, Mahāyāna as a movement distinct from and opposed to the early schools cannot be. Undoubtedly some of the tendencies which led to the Mahāyāna literature were already extant. To reconstruct the ideas of the early Mahāsāṅghikas we will have to discount this material and draw instead on the *Kathāvatthu* and the early Sarvāstivādin literature.

15. Chronological aspects

The three phases in the development of *abhidhamma* discussion which have been identified (section 10 above) can be approximately located in time. The Sammatiya tradition cited by Bhavya would suggest that *Phase One* might correspond to the period of debates at and just before the Mauryan period. *Phase Two* would be

113. See now G. Schopen, "The Inscription on the Kuṣān Image of Amitābha and the Character of the Early Mahāyāna in India", *JIABS*, 1987, 99-137 and P. Harrison, "Who Gets to Ride in the Great Vehicle? Self-image and Identity Among the Followers of the Early Mahāyāna", *JIABS*, 1987, 67-89.

during the Mauryan period and *Phase Three* at the end of the Mauryan period. The Pāli sources would locate the second phase in the reign of Aśoka. The third phase must then be later. The Pāli sources and the Sammatiya tradition are in that case approximately in line. There is, however, no way in which this can be reconciled with the Sarvāstivādin sources according to which the divisions among the Sthaviras do not begin until a hundred years after the accession of Aśoka.

It does not seem possible in the present state of historical knowledge to reach a firm decision either way. Perhaps, however, the balance of advantage still lies with the long chronology. Certain things follow, it seems, from whichever choice is made. If the long chronology is correct, then the Sarvāstivādin traditions as to the date of the works contained in their own *Abhidharmapiṭaka* may not be correct. We should probably date some of the later works earlier than tradition claims. Their dates will have been brought down in time to fit a shorter period than was actually the case.

Conversely, if the Sarvāstivādin tradition is correct, then certain aspects of the Sinhalese tradition cannot be accepted. In particular it will be difficult to accept the claim[114] that the Pāli canonical texts were set in writing for the first time at the end of the reign of Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya (89-77 BC) after a Tamil invasion leading to a period of Tamil rule and soon after the separation of the Abhayagirikas from the Mahāvihāra. As Bechert has commented,[115] "...beginning with that period [second century BC] the Ceylonese chronicles can be considered as highly reliable sources of historical information". They are in fact often confirmed by archaeological evidence. Given that this is the case, it is difficult to reject their testimony about events in Ceylon.

Bechert has recently revived the suggestion that there are indications of the presence of the short chronology in Ceylon at an early date.[116] This, I think, is mistaken, but there is evidence of a slightly different version of the long chronology. Most Ceylonese sources date the accession of Aśoka to 218 BE and the third communal recitation to 236 BE (i.e. 218 + 18). The commentary to the first book of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*, the *Aṭṭhasālinī* three times states that Moggaliputta Tissa promulgated the *Kathāvatthu* in 218 BE.[117] This strongly suggests that there may have been an earlier tradition which dated the third communal recitation to 218 BE. The precise authorship of the *Aṭṭhasālinī* is debated[118] but it is clear that, whether it was an early work of Buddhaghosa

114. e.g Dīp XX, 20-21.
115. H. Bechert, "The Date of the Buddha Reconsidered", 34-35.
116. H. Bechert, *Die Lebenszeit des Buddha*, 146-9; "Remarks on the Date of the Historical Buddha", 101-2.
117. As 3-4; 6. The first occurrence is attributed to a Vitaṇḍavādin, the other two to a prophecy of the Buddha.
118. P.V. Bapat & R.D. Vadekar, *Aṭṭhasālinī*, xxxiii ff.; Norman, *Pāli Literature*, 122-5.

himself or the work of an associate, it is less carefully edited than most of the other commentaries and sometimes preserves earlier traditions which have been normalized elsewhere.[119]

It we turn to the *Samantapāsādika*, we find an account of the legend of Moggaliputta Tissa.[120] This begins with the Elders of the second communal recitation searching the future to see if the *sāsana* will have such a scandal again. They see that "in the 118th year from now" a king named Dhammāsoka will arise, will generously give support, and many non-Buddhist mendicants (*titthiya*) will enter the *sāsana* and cause such an affair. The Elders decide to visit the future Moggaliputta who is at that time dwelling in the Brahmā world. They inform him that there would be a great scandal in the *sāsana* "in the 118th year from now". So we see that *both* the accession of Aśoka *and* the third communal recitation are attributed to 218 BE. Very probably this is the tradition that the Sinhalese found in the old commentary to the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* when they set out to determine the chronology of past events.

The *Mahāvaṃsa* gives an account of the life of Aśoka first and so only refers back to the elders' beholding the future, but it then goes on to the story of their visit to the future Moggaliputta and gives the same prediction of a time of trouble 'after 118 years'.[121] The *Dīpavaṃsa* simply begins with the prophecy regarding Moggaliputta: "That monk, an exemplary *samaṇa*, will arise 118 years in the future".[122] It is clear that the reason that no introductory account is given is that the *ācariyavāda* has been inserted between the prophecy and the first account of the second communal recitation. Nevertheless it clearly belongs in the context we find in the *Samantapāsādikā*. It must belong in the same context here, since the *parinibbāna* of the Elders of the second communal recitation is immediately mentioned, which would be unnecessary if the prophecy was by the Buddha. This cannot then be evidence of the presence of the short chronology. It is simply that the earlier prediction of the 'time of trouble' has become a prediction of the 'arising' of Moggaliputta.

The other passage in the *Dīpavaṃsa* which is cited as evidence for the short chronology occurs in the first chapter. The first communal recitation is mentioned; then the next *śloka* declares: "118 years after that will be the third recension."[123] As Oldenberg points out in his edition, the simplest explanation for this is that a *śloka* which mentioned the second communal recitation has dropped out.[124] This

119. L.S. Cousins, *op. cit.*, 38-9.
120. Sp 35ff. The Chinese version is almost the same; see P.V. Bapat, *Han-chien-pʾi-pʾo-sha*, 20-21.
121. Mhv V, 100.
122. Dip V, 55.
123. Dip I, 25.
124. *ibid.*, 15n.; cf. J. Filliozat, "Les deux Aśoka et les conciles bouddhiques", 190.

passage, then, like the *Aṭṭhasālinī* passage mentioned above is evidence for the date of 218 BE for the third communal recitation. The only other evidence known to me for the short chronology in Ceylonese sources is a verse attributed to the 'Ancients' *(Porāṇā)* in the late fourteenth century *Saddhamma-saṅgaha*.[125] However, this text refers to verses from the *Cūlavaṃsa* as by the 'Ancients'; so it is not evidence for an early date. Moreover, it has not been critically edited and the verse concerned is easily amended.[126]

There is, then, no reason to believe that the short chronology was known in ancient Ceylon, but considerable support for the existence of a tradition that the third communal recitation took place 118 years after the second. One might guess that originally the commentorial tradition recorded the same figure for both the king and the recitation. Subsequently it was realized that this was unlikely and the date of the recitation was moved a further eighteen years on. It seems better to adopt the reverse procedure. This would suggest that the accession of Aśoka took place about a hundred years after the second communal recitation (assuming that the third recitation took place about eighteen years later).[127] However, it is more likely that the figure is notional and slightly exaggerated as with the second communal recitation. In this case the accession of Aśoka should have taken place between about 140 and 160 BE (70/80 + 70/80).

This has the virtue of bringing the Sinhalese traditions into line with Bhavya's Sammatīya account. If we date Aśoka's accession at 52 years after the accession of Candragupta in c. 313 BC,[128] then the work of the founder of the Puḍgalavādins will take place around 261 BC with Moggalliputta's response and the third communal recitation, if there was one, at c. 243 BC. The beginning of the controversies would be 63 years before Aśoka, i.e. c. 324 BC under Mahāpadma Nanda. We know of course that a Nanda was ruling in Magadha at the time of Alexander's invasion (327-324 BC). This would imply a date for the beginning of

125. Saddhamma-s 47.
126. J. Filliozat, *op. cit.*, 191. Two other verses attributed to the *Purāṇā* are also relevant. Saddhamma-s 35 gives a date for the third communal recitation of 228 BE, while Saddhamma-s 44 gives the date of 238 BE for Mahinda's 'Fourth Council'.
127. K.R. Norman, "Aśoka's 'Schism' Edict", *Buddhist Seminar*, Kyoto, 1987, 16-18, summarizes the various Pāli accounts relating to the third communal recitation.The figure 'eighteen' is probably notional for a number of years. See G. Obeyesekere, "Myth, History and Numerology in the Buddhist Chronicles", to appear in the volume mentioned below (note 129).
128. J. Filliozat, "La date de l'avènement de Candragupta roi du Magadha (313 avant J.-C.)". Filliozat's arguments are not conclusive. However, since Candragupta's accession must be between Alexander's departure from India in 325 BC and the return of Seleucus from India to the battle of Ipsus in 302 BC, it represents a convenient median date. Magas of Cyrene probably died in c. 250 BC. — see F. Chamoux and further references in Peremans and Van't Dack, *Prosopographica Ptolemaica* VI; E. Will, *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique*, Nancy, 1979, I, 66ff; 264ff.

the Buddhist era btween 400 and 420 BC. Other evidence would also seem to support a date close to the end of the fifth century BC.[129]

It may be suggested that one reason why the length of time has been increased is an attempt to fit a king list with the Buddhist traditions. It seems most unlikely that the Buddhist *saṅgha* would have preserved a list of the kings of Magadha together with their regnal years. When the Sinhalese found a need for such a list, there is only one place they could have got it: the brahmins. If there is a general similarity between the Sinhalese tradition and that in the *Purāṇas*, it is because the Sinhalese got it from the *Purāṇas* or from where the *Purāṇas* got it. In fact we have no certainty of the existence of any other source from which they could have got it.

Summary

Sections 1-4 examine the historical problems and background, suggest a date of around 70-80 BE for the Council of Vaiśālī and discuss the available sources of information on the early Buddhist schools. The significance for this of the 'Five Points' is indicated. A discussion of the date of the *Kathāvatthu* indicates a stage in which there was a three-way controversy: Sarvāstivāda, Pudgalavāda and Vibhajyavāda.

Sections 5-10 examine the first four 'Points' in detail and seek to show that in their original form the fifth 'Point' was the question as to whether an arahat can fall away. The logical structure of the original 'Five Points' is indicated and it is suggested that in this form they were probably Sarvāstivādin. Three phases in the development of the *Kathāvatthu* are proposed.

Sections 11-14 examine the fifth 'Point' and explore its connection with the Mahādeva associated with the development of the later (southern) Mahāsāṅghika schools. Evidence from the *Kathāvatthu* is brought to bear on the nature of the earliest Mahāsāṅghika schools. The new formulation of the 'Five Points' is examined and suggestions are made as to the nature of the new developments among the Mahāsāṅghikas. In particular, trends to emphasize the altruistic value of developing the higher *jhānas* and a new formulation of a Mahāsāṅghika *abhidharma* seem likely.

Section 15 examines the chronological implications. Evidence in the Ceylon sources is advanced to support the existence of an early tradition dating the 'Third Council' to 218 BE. The suggestion that there is evidence for a 'short chronology' tradition in the Pāli sources is refuted.

129. See K.R. Norman, "Observations on the Dates of the Buddha and the Jina" (to be published in a volume on the date of the Buddha edited by H. Bechert).

Addendum

In late 1989 Professor Richard Gombrich circulated a paper on the date of the Buddha.[130] He has kindly given permission for it to be referred to here prior to publication. In this paper he has offered an ingenious reinterpretation of the data given in the *Dīpavaṃsa* and has convincingly shown that the information given there on the ages of the teachers in the *vinaya* lineage of Mahinda (traditionally interpreted as their age since ordination) is better and more consistently interpreted as their age since birth (or conception). This produces a date for the accession of Aśoka of c.136 BE (with a margin of uncertainty due to the addition of a series of life-spans given in figures rounded to whole years).

Gombrich takes the date of the accession of Aśoka to be c. 268 BC and therefore suggests that the Buddha's death took place "within six or even five" years of 404 BC. His argument can, I believe, be taken one step further. Gombrich discards all data given in the Pāli chronicles as to regnal years. This seems in general appropriate. However, the information in chapter five of the *Dīpavaṃsa* about the date of accession of Candragupta is likely to have been handed down as part of the *vinaya* lineage.[131] If so, Candragupta ascended the throne in c.100 BE.[132]

Taking the accession of Candragupta to occur in c. 313 BC, the following approximate chronology arises:

BC		BE
413	Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha	0
343/333	Second communal recitation	70/80
331	Birth of Moggaliputta Tissa[133]	82
326/5	Alexander in India	87/88
313	Accession of Candragupta	100
277	Accession of Aśoka[134]	136
271	Ordination of Mahinda	142
259	Third communal recitation	154

130. The title of the manuscript was "Dating the Buddha: A Red Herring Revealed".

131. Dīp V 69.

132. Could this be the source of some of the 'short chronology' traditions? The later more familiar name of Aśoka could have been substituted for that of Candragupta.

133. The story in Sp of the Elders of the second communal recitation visiting Moggaliputta Tissa in the Brahmā world and requesting him to take birth now fits in very well (see pp. 47-48 above).

134. The five Greek kings mentioned in the 13th Rock Edict would then be:
1. The Seleucid Antiochus I (281/280 - 261 BC) or Antiochus II (261-246 BC)
2. Ptolemy II of Egypt (285/283-246 BC)
3. Antigonus II of Macedonia (276-239 BC)
4. Alexander II of Epirus (from 272/271 BC - date of death not known)
5. Magas of Cyrenaica (c. 275-c. 250 BC).

The Edict could not have been inscribed before the accession of Alexander of Epirus in 272/271 BC nor much after 250 BC.

245 Death of Moggaliputta Tissa 168

Although these dates are only approximate, they offer a real possibility of establishing a definitive chronology, if new archaeological or other information should come to light.

The reason why the Ceylon chronicles went astray is now clear. They must have had access to brahmanical traditions on the regnal years of the kings of Magadha (as well as to a northern account of the development of the 'eighteen' schools). They constructed (in the *Mahāvaṃsa* or its sources) a new, more consistent chronology in an attempt to reconcile their own traditions (which must have been based on the lineage of Mahinda) with the new data. Ironically, it transpires that they would have been better advised to be less open to overseas influences and keep their own tradition.

Some Formative Influences in Mahāyāna Buddhist Art

P.T. Denwood

The importance of art in Vajrayāna Buddhism

Religions differ in the importance they place on representational art. Some — such as orthodox Islam, one phase of Zoroastrianism, and some forms of protestant Christianity — have actively discouraged it. Others — catholic and orthodox Christianity and some forms of Hinduism — encourage it but can live happily without it. Vajrayāna Buddhism appears to be a religion in which representational art is essential. The tantras themselves, presented by their adherents as the fundamental documents of their system, place great importance on iconographical descriptions of the deities and of their *maṇḍalas*, which constitute a representational simulacrum of totality, and form the basis of most of the practices of the religion. Although the philosophical argumentation taken for granted by the *tantras* could be said to be equally or perhaps more fundamental, it is hard to see how a Buddhism stripped of iconography could possibly function in the distinctive way which the Vajrayāna does. The investigation of artistic elements and motifs, their meanings, associations and symbolism, origins and historical development is therefore of peculiar importance in the study of Vajrayāna Buddhism, because it touches on the very core of the religious system. In this paper I shall indicate what I think may be some formative influences on the development of the *maṇḍala*, which will necessitate going back to a presumably pre-Vajrayāna phase of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and further afield into the history of India and of western Asia.

The first few centuries of the first millennium AD saw the rapid spread of the universal religions of Christianity and Buddhism in western and central Asia, territories ruled by the imperial powers of Rome, the Parthians, Kushans and Sasanians, in parts of which Zoroastrianism also flourished. Imperial and universal ideologies contributed to a burgeoning of new iconographic and architectural forms at a time of great cultural interchange between different regions.

Byzantine architecture

The architectonic form of the classical, pre-Christian temple of Greece and Rome is well-known with its axial plan, its inner cella, surrounding columns and gabled

Finally — the conclusion of my conclusion — one has to distinguish between a scriptural doctrine and the way it is used. All Three Ways I have outlined in the practice of Newar Buddhism are conceived to be for the individual seeking enlightenment. The fact that all three, in spite of the different ideals envisaged in each, are focused on the individual was no doubt a factor enabling Buddhism to absorb Tantrism so thoroughly. However, we have seen that in practice Vajrayāna Buddhism is used for the restrictive secret face of Newar Buddhism, whereas Mahāyāna Buddhism is its public one. Although in theory the Vajrayāna is open to all — or at least all may aspire to it — in practice its stress on secrecy and initiation is used to exclude the low born and outsiders, to define patrilineages, and to maintain a caste monopoly of Buddhist monkhood and priesthood.

1.20/3

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Councils as Ideas and Events in the Theravāda

Charles Hallisey*

> "Before giving a short survey of the traditions relative to the Buddhist Councils, it seems advisable to state what these councils were."
>
> Louis de la Vallée Poussin[1]

It is a standard scholarly practice to begin a presentation of research with a definition, in the strict sense of the word, of the subject which has been investigated. We are encouraged to do this early in our education, with reminders to 'define your terms', and we generally admire the clarity that a good definition can bring to an argument. We value definitions, even 'working definitions', in the presentation of research so routinely that we rarely consider the implications of this practice for research itself. All of us know by hard experience that the actual processes of research are far messier than is suggested by the way we present our research. Even so, we assume certain parallels. Our research begins with a choice of a subject that seems to function like the initial definition in a research presentation. But while we may begin with an attempt to define a subject, as a practical way of limiting and focusing our research, in the course of investigation we often discover a state of affairs quite different from what we had anticipated. This common turn of events can dismay or discourage, but it can also delight. 'A new discovery' — major, of course — is the stuff scholarly dreams are made of.

It would be one thing if the first definition, taken as the starting point for research, were wrong, out and out wrong, and thus could be replaced by the new understanding. This is actually quite rare, however, in large part because we usually adapt these first working definitions from other sources. As Bernard Cohn has said, "each piece of research doesn't start as if it were year one, nor does the

* An earlier version of this paper was presented as part of a panel on "Rethinking Theravāda Buddhism" at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., March 1989. I have benefited greatly from the papers and comments of my co-panelists at that meeting (George Bond, John Ross Carter, Steven Collins, Charles Keyes, and Frank Reynolds).

1. Louis de la Vallée Poussin, "Councils and Synods: Buddhist", *ERE*, vol. 4, 179.

scholar begin as a *tabula rasa* to be instructed by the native or the document, nor is he or she merely a pencil which records in some fashion what is read or seen."[2] In fact, what we choose to study is probably set more by the units of study or theoretical assumptions in our particular field of training than by the subject matter itself. The seemingly better understanding of a topic ends up being merely another interpretation yielded by a different theoretical perspective. One understanding does not negate another, nor do we see ways that they might be related in a common schema. Different understandings are allowed simply to co-exist, in mutual isolation, while we argue back and forth.

For a community of scholars this is disastrous. Our research presentations end up bearing witness to our lives in an academic Tower of Babel.

It is easy to see how this occurred. As students of Buddhism, we may welcome new approaches to the rich resources of the Buddhist traditions.[3] There is more than enough work to do, and labourers are still few. Perhaps the chronological and spatial extent of the Buddhist traditions made the introduction of some new approaches relatively unproblematic at first. For example, anthropologists and sociologists, seeking to understand the workings of culture and society, were naturally drawn to the study of contemporary Buddhist communities, fields of research which textualists and historians generally preferred to ignore.

This division of labour appears neater than it actually is. It looks as if it is a division of subject matter, with historian and anthropologist each examining what he or she is best prepared to study. But it sometimes masks a more profound difference in theoretical perspective. This difference becomes an obstacle when both anthropologists and historians have their own definite ideas about a common subject. Such is the case with the councils (*saṅgīti* or *saṅgāyanā*) in the Theravāda.

The purpose of this paper is propaedeutic. That is, I wish to follow La Vallée Poussin's advice, given in the quotation at the start of this paper, and sketch out what the councils were in the Theravāda; this sketch is a preliminary to the survey of the councils I am working on. My purpose is to define the subject by showing how different scholarly understandings of councils may be combined to interpret their place in the Theravāda as a historical tradition. Moreover, in sketching out what the councils were, I hope to indicate how they might be fruitfully studied. These programmatic comments, I think, will have applicability to other areas in the study of Buddhism.

Charles Prebish evocatively referred to the first Buddhist Councils as problems which have "haunted western Buddhological research through almost all of its last

2. Bernard Cohn, "History and Anthropology: The State of Play", in *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1987, 47.
3. Indeed this is one of the purposes of the Buddhist Forum. See Tadeusz Skorupski's Introduction to *The Buddhist Forum*, vol. I, London, SOAS, 1990, 1.

one hundred years".[4] Even though these first Buddhist councils might seem to be a natural starting point for any investigation of the Theravādin councils, to begin with them is actually to become embroiled in a complicated and ongoing debate.[5] Much of this debate, especially on the historical value of different accounts about these councils, seems one-sided when viewed from the vantage point of later Theravādin cultural history. To begin from the later Theravādin councils is equally problematic though, since these events conventionally draw their sanction from accounts of the earlier councils.

Our difficulty is an academic chicken and egg problem: in order to understand the individual councils, the parts, we need to have some idea of the councils as a whole, but we generally only know the whole through the individual parts. Some way out of this hermeneutical circle, in this particular instance, can be found by looking at a similar case, the role of the Pāli canon in the Theravāda.

In recent years, two different orientations to the Pāli canon have emerged in the scholarly literature concerned with contemporary Theravādin communities.[6] Both are reactions against the interpretive prominence the canon has had in Buddhist studies. One orientation emphasizes the actual possession and use of texts. Charles Keyes, for example, has argued that

> "the relevance of texts to religious dogma in the worldview of any people cannot be assumed simply because some set of texts has been recognized as belonging to a particular religious tradition. It is necessary, in every particular case, to identify those texts that can be shown to be the sources of dogmatic formulations that are being communicated to the people through some medium. There is no single integrated textual tradition based on a 'canon' to the exclusion of all other texts...
>
> The very size and complexity of a canon leads those who use it to give differential emphasis to its component texts. Moreover, even those for whom a defined set of scriptures exists will employ as sources of religious ideas many texts which do not belong to a canon... [Finally,] for any particular temple-monastery in Thailand or Laos, the collection of texts available to the people in the associated community is not exactly the same as those found in another temple-monastery. In brief,

4. C. S. Prebish, "A Review of Scholarship on the Buddhist Councils", *JAS*, 1974, 239.
5. Bibliographic information on this vigorous and inconclusive debate may be conveniently found in J.W. de Jong, *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*, Varanasi, Bharat-Bharati, 1976, 30-31, 67, and in Prebish's article, cited in note 4.
6. My comments here depend greatly on the work of Steven Collins in his paper, "On the Very Idea of the Pāli Canon", *JPTS*, vol. 14, forthcoming.

the relevance of textual formulations to religious dogma in popular worldviews is problematic in each specific case."[7]

The orientation that emerges from this discussion is primarily concerned with issues of transmission and distribution: 'who had what texts when?'

A second orientation emphasizes the *idea* of the canon. François Bizot, for example, has pointed out with respect to modern Khmer Buddhism that the term *tipiṭaka* "refers less to a collection of texts than to an ideological concept".[8] This orientation is concerned more with the internal constitution of the tradition: 'what makes the Theravāda valid from the point of view of Theravādins?'.

The two orientations highlight different facts. The first highlights the presence within the Theravāda of standpoints which are geographically and historically very particular. This particularity, however, may be obscured for Buddhist individuals and groups by the phenomenon highlighted by the second orientation, a perspective which is considerably loftier and less determinately located.

These two orientations, taken together, can and should replace an assumption that was once more widely held than it is today, although it still has a pernicious influence in scholarship. That is, it was once widely assumed that the Pāli canon — or the 'early Buddhism' which was reconstructed from the canon — constituted the Theravāda in all its essentials. With this assumption, almost all interesting questions about the Theravāda as a historical tradition remained unasked. The two, more recent orientations are clearly an improvement on that assumption, and although they were developed in connection with the study of contemporary Buddhism, they are still very useful as tools for historical investigations.

In shorthand, I will call the first orientation's focus 'event' and the focus of the second orientation 'idea'.[9] By calling the first 'event', I wish to stress how a particular set of circumstances is largely accidental and thus unique. A scholar employing this orientation as an interpretive tool will discover how this set of circumstances came about and the impact that it subsequently had. When these multiple sets of circumstances collectively change to a substantial degree, then one may speak of a transition or transformation in the tradition.[10] By 'idea', I mean to emphasize persisting patterns of meanings and norms which mark the Theravāda; this notion could equally well be called 'structure'. These patterns can sanction or even shape the actions of individuals and groups.

The notion of *event* is more conventionally historical in its emphases, while the notion of *idea* is more typical of anthropology. Each can be used as a heuristic tool independent of the other, according to the research purposes of the scholar, but the phenomena they refer to are inevitably interrelated. The reason for the transmission of manuscripts of the *tipiṭaka* cannot be separated from the idea of the canon. And if we are aware that the texts of the canon are variously interpreted in different circumstances, as Keyes argues, at the same time we need to remember that the idea of the canon provides a framework which gives relative meaning and significance to the reading or hearing of other texts, or the performance of rituals.

I am not advocating that we should have recourse to ever-ready ahistorical frameworks of meaning here. We need to discover frameworks of significance, like the idea of the canon, within particular historical contexts; we should probably expect to find that persons may employ more than one framework within any given context. But when we are able to identify such frameworks *in situ*, we will then be able to see the constructedness of the Theravāda tradition. To put it another way, when we discern 'events' being given meaning by 'ideas' and 'ideas' being shaped by 'events' in particular contexts, we will be able to see the Theravāda as a tradition whose identity is continually being constituted and reconstituted with its history and account of continuity in difference.

These general lessons — a distinction between event and idea, and the correlation of these two notions — can be applied specifically to the Theravādin

7. Charles Keyes, "Merit-Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravāda Buddhism", in Charles Keyes & E. Valentine Daniel, eds., *Karma: An Anthropological Inquiry*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983, 272. Compare Richard Gombrich's comments: "The contents of sacred texts are not simply reproduced in the doctrines of the religions which venerate them; there must be interpretation and selective emphasis. This is obviously true when the corpus of sacred literature is large, as in Christianity and Buddhism. Historians of these religions may therefore ask why certain doctrines and certain scriptures have been emphasized at the expense of others." R. Gombrich, "Buddhist Karma and Social Control", *CSSH*, 17, 1975, 212.

8. François Bizot, *Le figuier à cinq branches*, Paris, EFEO, 1976, 21. This orientation has been elaborated very convincingly in the paper by Steven Collins cited in note 6.

9. Bernard Cohn, *op. cit.*, 45, speaks of the same distinction in the following way: "We write of an event as being unique, something that happens only once, yet every culture has a means to convert the uniqueness into a general and transcendent meaningfulness through the language members of the society speak... [For example], the death of a ruler may be mourned by rituals which turn the biographic fact of a death into a public statement relating not only to a particular ruler but to rulership *per se*. In many societies ritual transforms uniqueness into structure."

10. See Charles Keyes, *The Golden Peninsula*, New York, Macmillan, 1977, 86: "If the true Buddhist is one who seeks to become an Arahat, the fully perfected monk who attains enlightenment, then quite obviously Buddhism could never be a popular religion. It would be a religion of only a small number of adepts. Ancient Buddhism may have been such a religion, but it underwent a transformation first in the third century B.C., when it was brought under the patronage of King Asoka who set an example for other ruling elites. Theravāda Buddhism was further transformed in the fifth century A.D. through the theological interpretations of Buddhaghosa and several of his contemporaries. Finally, it went through yet another transformation in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries when it became a universal religion, a religion for peasant farmer as well as for monk and king."

saṅgītis. While the first lesson is already a major, if implicit, part of the scholarly literature on the Theravādin councils, the second still needs to be learned.[11]

Buddhological investigation of the first three councils at Rājagaha, Vesālī, and Pāṭaliputta has generally been part of a larger scholarly project to shed light on the Buddhist past "as it really was", to use von Ranke's phrase, with the result that the councils were defined, almost *a priori*, as events. While the goal of recovering the past "as it really was" remains unrealized — if indeed such an aim is even possible — comparative research on the various accounts of the First Councils found in Buddhist literature did succeed in making it impossible to attribute historical accuracy to any single description preserved by a particular Buddhist tradition. In short, one of the accomplishments of a century of research on the First Councils has been to drive a wedge between our perception of the councils as historical events and Buddhist ideas about the councils.

Scholarly reaction to this distinction between councils as ideas and councils as events gradually evolved. An initial and understandable reaction was to see the distinction as offering a clear and sharp choice: the accounts either contain real history or they are fiction. Commenting on the account of the councils in the *Vinaya*, Oldenberg wrote, "what we have here before us is not history, but pure invention".[12] A tendency to see the accounts as essentially fictions was perhaps strengthened by the development of questions about the motives which could have

11. For an example of a failure to correlate the two notions of 'event' and 'idea', see the critique by Michael Carrithers of Stanley Tambiah on the subject of Parākkamabāhu's council in twelfth-century Sri Lanka. Carrithers writes: "In *World Conqueror* Tambiah, pursuing the relationship between kings and monks, dwells at length on the purification of the Buddhist order carried out by Parākkamabāhu I of Sri Lanka. He argues that this was patterned after a similar act of the Emperor Aśoka, preceded other similar royal acts, and was therefore part of a pervasive pattern in the relationship between royalty and the Buddhist order throughout Buddhist history. On this account all purifications were analogous, the working out of a particular timeless relation between kings and monks. But such an account leaves out the single most important feature of Parākkamabāhu I's reform, namely that it was a radically new interpretation of the king's role, an interpretation which set a new pattern for Theravāda and Theravādin kings." (Michael Carrithers, "Buddhists without History", *CIS*, N.S. 21, 1987, 167.)
Tambiah's rejoinder to Carrithers, in the same issue of *CIS*, does show a movement towards the combination of heuristic concepts that I have in mind: "Carrithers ... seem(s) to have the simplistic notion that there are only two kinds of historical interpretation possible — there is either a stasis and repetition of the past or there is a radical change. (He does) not seem to appreciate both the complexity and the pervasiveness of a historical condition in which certain kinds of persistence *coexist* with certain kinds of change of state, and such amalgams and syntheses of varying kinds and varying degrees of cohesion and tension characterise much of the so-called flow of history." (Stanley Tambiah, "At the Confluence of Anthropology, History, and Indology", 194.)

12. Hermann Oldenberg, "Introduction", in *The Vinaya Piṭakam*, ed. by H. Oldenberg, London, Williams & Norgate, 1879, xxvii.

123/3

led to the composition of the council narratives. Przyluski, for example, argued that "one (could) explain the diversity of the accounts of the (first) council (by saying that) there are so many different recitations *[saṅgīti]* as there are sects having a distinct canon. Each school tries to prove that its canon dates back to the origins of the Church and that it was codified by the assembly of Rājagṛha".[13]

Przyluski's comment illustrates the possibility of discussing Buddhist ideas about the councils independently of any judgement about the historical incidents themselves. He displays a significance in the ideas that is worth pursuing on their own terms even if the accounts are not reports of 'real' occurrences.

In a similar way, scholars have formulated questions about the events which can be pursued in isolation from Buddhist ideas about the councils. La Vallée Poussin intimated this possibility in his entry on Buddhist councils in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics:* "While it is impossible to accept the Buddhist opinion, which views them as ecumenical assemblies after the Nicene type, it is at the same time necessary to explain how Buddhist monastic life, without the help of such solemn assemblies, nevertheless resulted in a sort of 'catholicism', and secured the redaction and the compilation of Canons of scripture very like one another."[14] La Vallée Poussin's position was that "while acknowledging the possibility (even the probability) of synods, we are at no loss to point out more certain and farther reaching causes of the facts to be explained, viz. the formation of the body of the Scriptures, the general (if not strict) 'consensus' of the sects of the Hīnayāna as concerns Buddha's teaching, and conversely, the splitting of the Order into sects."[15]

More recently, in an earlier series of the Buddhist Forum, Richard Gombrich illustrated another way that the First Councils might be discussed as events independent of the Buddhist accounts, although he offers a more positive evaluation of those accounts than La Vallée Poussin allowed. The discussion quoted here takes up the same question as La Vallée Poussin: how did the teachings of the Buddha, given over a long period of time in many places, come to be collected into what eventually became the Pāli Canon?

> "The *Saṅgīti-suttanta* begins by recounting that at the death of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta his followers disagreed about what he had said. The same passage occurs at two other points in the Pāli canon; but it makes good sense in this context, for it is the occasion for rehearsing a long summary of the Buddha's teaching in the form of mnemonic lists. The text says that the rehearsal was led by Sāriputta, in the Buddha's lifetime. Whether the text records a historical incident we shall probably

13. Jean Przyluski, *Le concile de Rājagṛha*, quoted in Prebish, 243.
14. La Vallée Poussin, *ERE*, vol. 4, 179.
15. La Vallée Poussin, *ibid.*, 179.

never know. But that is not my point. I would argue that unless we posit that such episodes took place not merely after the Buddha's death but as soon as Saṅgha had reached a size and geographic spread which precluded frequent meetings with the Buddha, it is not possible to conceive how the teachings were preserved or texts were composed. By similar reasoning, something like the first *saṅgāyanā* (communal recitation) must have taken place, otherwise there would simply be no corpus of scriptures. Details such as the precise time and place of the event are irrelevant to this consideration."[16]

The historical reasoning in this discussion is noteworthy. I would especially like to draw attention to Gombrich's use of the historian's knowledge of the outcome of the past to provide an alternative perspective with which to view and reconstruct the processes of early Buddhist history. His reasoning restores some balance to the scholar's choice of seeing the first Buddhist councils as either events or as ideas, as fact or fiction. It is understandable that since there is no archaeological or epigraphical evidence actually from the First Council, its historicity could appear quite suspect in the light of the all-too-obvious, vested interests expressed in the various council narratives. Gombrich's reasoning makes us seriously consider the historicity of an event like the First Council as a necessity.[17].

Is what we learn from this argument, however, transferable to later events which are also compared to or described as councils? This question would apply not only to the Second and Third Councils, but also to the events sponsored by Theravādins in the medieval and late periods. Gombrich seems to suggest such a possibility when he says without qualification in another context "the Councils *(saṅgāyanā)*, better termed Communal Recitations, served the function of systematizing knowledge and perhaps of organizing its further preservation".[18] Similarly, K.R. Norman seems to project a pattern from the First Council on to the events of the medieval Theravāda:

16. R.F. Gombrich, "Recovering the Buddha's Message", *The Buddhist Forum*, vol. I, 6. It is interesting to note that Minayeff took the minor details of the accounts as "to some extent historical" (cited in La Vallée Poussin, 182). Thus both the plot and the details of the first councils have been described as both fact and fiction. Cf. Richard Gombrich, "How the Mahāyāna Began", *The Buddhist Forum*, vol. I, 26.
17. It is also the case that the general scholarly tendency now current is to give the Buddhist accounts "the benefit of the doubt", in contrast to the inclination of scholars around the turn of this century. K.R. Norman, for example, writes: "Although we may have reservations about the texts which were dealt with at the first council, there is no reason to doubt the general way in which it was held". (K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1983.) At one time, this would have been a highly provocative statement.
18. R.F. Gombrich, "How the Mahāyāna Began", 25-26.

"It is not inappropriate to talk of a Burmese or Siamese or Sinhalese tradition for the transmission of a particular text, and the differences which we find between the readings of the manuscripts belonging to the various traditions must go back to the councils which have been held from time to time in the different countries. (T)he value of each tradition (stemming from different councils) will depend upon the care with which evidence for variant readings was sifted, and the criteria which were adopted as the basis of the decisions which were made."[19]

A projection of patterns reconstructed from events, however, is misleading. The *Mahāvaṃsa*, the great chronicle of Sri Lanka, records at least twelve councils in medieval Sri Lanka, and it is notable that a communal recitation or recension of the *tipiṭaka* is not mentioned as being part of any.[20] In fact, I am not aware of any definite evidence dating from the medieval period itself which indicates that "communal recitations" were held, although events which did occur still claimed the Third Council as a precedent.[21]

Thus, as much as I admire Gombrich's historical reasoning in connection with the events of the First Council, I also think we should keep in mind that it is applied to a specific body of evidence, in connection with a particular problem in reconstructing the Buddhist past. How much this reconstruction can serve as a guide to other events is a more difficult issue. On the one hand, the historical problems which confront a student of the Theravāda, whatever the period, are not quite the same as those facing the students of early Buddhism, even when both may be concerned with similar issues. This difference is, in part, due to the increasing complexity of the tradition itself; for example, the student of the Theravāda, aware of the *bhāṇaka* system and the use of writing, must acknowledge that "communal recitations" were not strictly necessary for the

19. K.R. Norman, *Pāli Literature*, 13.
20. See *Mahāvaṃsa*, 39:57; 41:2; 44:46; 44:76ff.; 48:71; 51:64; 52:10; 52:44; 73:11ff.; 78:2ff.; 84:7; 91:10; 100:44.
21. An event in the medieval period which does approximate to the conventional functions usually attributed to a "communal recitation", such as preserving knowledge and transmitting texts, is Vijayabāhu III's patronage of a rewriting of the canon (*Mahāvaṃsa* 81:40-45). Significantly, the participants in this event were laymen, and it is not described as either a *saṅgīti* or a *saṅgāyanā*.
The event which perhaps comes closest to an actual "communal recitation" is the scripture revision and recitation sponsored by King Tilaka at Chiang Mai in 1475-7; this event is described in the *Jinakālamālī* (London: PTS, 1962), 115. Again, this event is not described in the *Jinakālamālī* as a *saṅgāyanā*, although later texts in the Thai tradition (e.g. *Saṅgītiyavaṃsa*) do accept it as such. It is also significant that this event was probably held after the writing of the *Saddhammasaṅgaha*, which radically recast the traditional idea of a *saṅgāyanā*.

preservation of the Pāli canon.[22] On the other hand, simply projecting a pattern reconstructed from one event on to other events avoids asking how Theravāda Buddhists themselves transformed unique events into ideas of general meaningfulness.

The Theravāda's transformation of councils from events into ideas has been brilliantly investigated by Heinz Bechert in two articles which may be read together profitably.[23] Bechert's main purpose in the first article is to add to our knowledge of the Third Council as a historical event, but as part of a secondary argument, he traces how the events of that council were subsequently transformed in the Pāli commentaries and chronicles. In a manner reminiscent of Pryzluski's explanation of the diversity in the accounts of the First Council, Bechert argues that the events at Pāṭaliputra were actually a 'synod' of a monastic sub-group (*nikāya*), which later and for obvious reasons were portrayed as a unification and purification of the entire Saṅgha. In a second article on *sāsana* reform, Bechert discusses how these ideas about Asoka and the Third Council were used in the medieval Theravāda, arguing that the transformation of the historical Asoka into a Theravādin sectarian in the chronicles and commentaries provided a "foundation for ideology of state-Saṅgha relations in Theravāda countries".[24]

Keeping Bechert's insights, I would turn his statement around and say that Theravādins preferred to convert unique events into phenomena of general meaning and import by historicist transformations.[25] The presence of historical consciousness in the Theravāda tradition has frequently been noted, but its full significance in the development of the tradition still remains obscure.[26] Even so, there is ample evidence that one of the uses of history in the Theravāda tradition

22. On the *bhāṇaka* system, see E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Migoda, D.S. Puswella, 1946, 24-32. Adikaram traces this system of reciters, but also suggests that Buddhaghosa saw the *bhāṇaka* system as making *saṅgāyanā* unnecessary as a means of preserving and transmitting the canon.
23. Heinz Bechert, "Aśokas 'schismenedikt' und der Begrift Saṅghabheda", *WZKSO*, 5, 1961, 18-52, and, by the same author, "Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha: Some General Observations on Historical and Political Factors in its Development", *JAS*, 29, 1970, 761-778. See also Heinz Bechert, "The Importance of Aśoka's So-called Schism Edict", *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong*, Canberra, Faculty of Asian Studies, 1982, 61-68.
24. H. Bechert, "Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha", 764.
25. On the historicist transformation of the Pali canon, see S. Collins's paper cited in n. 7.
26. See, for example, Heinz Bechert, "The Beginnings of Buddhist Historiography: *Mahāvaṃsa* and Political Thinking", in Bardwell L. Smith, ed., *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Ceylon*, Chambersburg, PA, Anima, 1978. In another vein, Stanley Tambiah, in *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1977, says that "one of the most important features of (the) Theravāda Buddhist politics is their active *consciousness of historical continuity* (page 518, emphasis in the original).

was to give individual events a general significance with ideas that have the appearance of being reports about previous events.

On the functioning of a previous event as an idea which can sanction other events, David Lowenthal has written that "the past validates present attitudes and actions by affirming their resemblance to former ones. Previous usage seals with approval what is now done". At the same time, "precedent legitimates action on the assumption, explicit or implicit, that what has been should continue to be or be again".[27]

The use of the past to provide a general order of meaning is common in Theravādin literature and inscriptions. We see this use of the past, for example, in connection with Parākkamabāhu I's reform of the Saṅgha in twelfth-century Sri Lanka, as when the *Mahāvaṃsa* explicitly compares that king to Asoka in its detailed description of that council.[28] The historicist transformation of the event of the Third Council into an idea is even more prominent in Parākkamabāhu's Galvihara inscription which explains his motives for purifying the monastic order of his day:

> "Now, His Majesty reasoned thus: 'Seeing over and over again a blot such as this on the immaculate Buddhist religion, if a mighty emperor like myself were to remain indifferent, the Buddhist religion would perish, and many living beings will be destined to the *apāya*. Let me serve the Buddhist religion which should last five thousand years.'...
>
> (His Majesty pondered that in days gone by) the great king Dharma Aśoka, enlisting the services of Moggaliputta Tissa, the Great Elder of the Buddha Cycle acknowledged by the Buddha himself, crushed out the sinful *bhikkhus*; suppressed the heretics; purged the religion of its impurities and brought about the holding of the Third Rehearsal of the *Dhamma*. In like manner, His Majesty [Parākkamabāhu] also enlisted the services of those *(Udumbara-giri) bhikkhus* and, removing from the Master's religion many hundreds of sinful monks, brought about a *rapprochement* of the three fraternities and a coalition of them into one single fraternity (*nikāya*) — a reconciliation which former kings, despite their great efforts, were not able to effect, even though there were at the time eminently holy personages endowed with aggregates of diverse faculties such as the six psychic powers, etc."[29]

27. David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 40. On the past as a sanction in the Theravāda tradition, see S. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*, 528ff.
28. *Mahāvaṃsa*, 78, 27.
29. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, London, Humphrey Milford, 1928, II, 274-275. Concerning this council, see the exchange between Michael Carrithers and Stanley Tambiah cited in note 11.

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20. See *Mahāvaṃsa*, 39:57; 41:2; 44:46; 44:76ff.; 48:71; 51:64; 52:10; 52:44; 73:11ff.; 78:2ff.; 84:7; 91:10; 100:44.
21. An event in the medieval period which does approximate to the conventional functions usually attributed to a "communal recitation", such as preserving knowledge and transmitting texts, is Vijayabāhu III's patronage of a rewriting of the canon (*Mahāvaṃsa* 81:40-45). Significantly, the participants in this event were laymen, and it is not described as either a *saṅgīti* or a *saṅgāyanā*.
The event which perhaps comes closest to an actual "communal recitation" is the scripture revision and recitation sponsored by King Tilaka at Chiang Mai in 1475-7; this event is described in the *Jinakālamālī* (London: PTS, 1962), 115. Again, this event is not described in the *Jinakālamālī* as a *saṅgāyanā*, although later texts in the Thai tradition (e.g. *Saṅgītiyavaṃsa*) do accept it as such. It is also significant that this event was probably held after the writing of the *Saddhammasaṅgaha*, which radically recast the traditional idea of a *saṅgāyanā*.

preservation of the Pāli canon.[22] On the other hand, simply projecting a pattern reconstructed from one event on to other events avoids asking how Theravāda Buddhists themselves transformed unique events into ideas of general meaningfulness.

The Theravāda's transformation of councils from events into ideas has been brilliantly investigated by Heinz Bechert in two articles which may be read together profitably.[23] Bechert's main purpose in the first article is to add to our knowledge of the Third Council as a historical event, but as part of a secondary argument, he traces how the events of that council were subsequently transformed in the Pāli commentaries and chronicles. In a manner reminiscent of Pryzluski's explanation of the diversity in the accounts of the First Council, Bechert argues that the events at Pāṭaliputra were actually a 'synod' of a monastic sub-group (*nikāya*), which later and for obvious reasons were portrayed as a unification and purification of the entire Saṅgha. In a second article on *sāsana* reform, Bechert discusses how these ideas about Asoka and the Third Council were used in the medieval Theravāda, arguing that the transformation of the historical Asoka into a Theravādin sectarian in the chronicles and commentaries provided a "foundation for ideology of state-Saṅgha relations in Theravāda countries".[24]

Keeping Bechert's insights, I would turn his statement around and say that Theravādins preferred to convert unique events into phenomena of general meaning and import by historicist transformations.[25] The presence of historical consciousness in the Theravāda tradition has frequently been noted, but its full significance in the development of the tradition still remains obscure.[26] Even so, there is ample evidence that one of the uses of history in the Theravāda tradition

22. On the *bhāṇaka* system, see E.W. Adikaram, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, Migoda, D.S. Puswella, 1946, 24-32. Adikaram traces this system of reciters, but also suggests that Buddhaghosa saw the *bhāṇaka* system as making *saṅgāyanā* unnecessary as a means of preserving and transmitting the canon.
23. Heinz Bechert, "Aśokas 'schismenedikt' und der Begrift Saṅghabheda", *WZKSO*, 5, 1961, 18-52, and, by the same author, "Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha: Some General Observations on Historical and Political Factors in its Development", *JAS*, 29, 1970, 761-778. See also Heinz Bechert, "The Importance of Aśoka's So-called Schism Edict", *Indological and Buddhist Studies: Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong*, Canberra, Faculty of Asian Studies, 1982, 61-68.
24. H. Bechert, "Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha", 764.
25. On the historicist transformation of the Pali canon, see S. Collins's paper cited in n. 7.
26. See, for example, Heinz Bechert, "The Beginnings of Buddhist Historiography: *Mahāvaṃsa* and Political Thinking", in Bardwell L. Smith, ed., *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Ceylon*, Chambersburg, PA, Anima, 1978. In another vein, Stanley Tambiah, in *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1977, says that "one of the most important features of (the) Theravāda Buddhist politics is their active *consciousness of historical continuity* (page 518, emphasis in the original).

was to give individual events a general significance with ideas that have the appearance of being reports about previous events.

On the functioning of a previous event as an idea which can sanction other events, David Lowenthal has written that "the past validates present attitudes and actions by affirming their resemblance to former ones. Previous usage seals with approval what is now done". At the same time, "precedent legitimates action on the assumption, explicit or implicit, that what has been should continue to be or be again".[27]

The use of the past to provide a general order of meaning is common in Theravādin literature and inscriptions. We see this use of the past, for example, in connection with Parākkamabāhu I's reform of the Saṅgha in twelfth-century Sri Lanka, as when the *Mahāvaṃsa* explicitly compares that king to Asoka in its detailed description of that council.[28] The historicist transformation of the event of the Third Council into an idea is even more prominent in Parākkamabāhu's Galvihara inscription which explains his motives for purifying the monastic order of his day:

> "Now, His Majesty reasoned thus: 'Seeing over and over again a blot such as this on the immaculate Buddhist religion, if a mighty emperor like myself were to remain indifferent, the Buddhist religion would perish, and many living beings will be destined to the *apāya*. Let me serve the Buddhist religion which should last five thousand years.'...
>
> (His Majesty pondered that in days gone by) the great king Dharma Aśoka, enlisting the services of Moggaliputta Tissa, the Great Elder of the Buddha Cycle acknowledged by the Buddha himself, crushed out the sinful *bhikkhus*; suppressed the heretics; purged the religion of its impurities and brought about the holding of the Third Rehearsal of the *Dhamma*. In like manner, His Majesty [Parākkamabāhu] also enlisted the services of those *(Udumbara-giri) bhikkhus* and, removing from the Master's religion many hundreds of sinful monks, brought about a *rapprochement* of the three fraternities and a coalition of them into one single fraternity (*nikāya*) — a reconciliation which former kings, despite their great efforts, were not able to effect, even though there were at the time eminently holy personages endowed with aggregates of diverse faculties such as the six psychic powers, etc."[29]

27. David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 40. On the past as a sanction in the Theravāda tradition, see S. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*, 528ff.
28. *Mahāvaṃsa*, 78, 27.
29. *Epigraphia Zeylanica*, London, Humphrey Milford, 1928, II, 274-275. Concerning this council, see the exchange between Michael Carrithers and Stanley Tambiah cited in note 11.

council, as far as our sources allow. Some of these accomplishments may appear decidedly impious, such as the economic benefits that fell to a king from monastic reform. We also need to keep in mind the historical importance of the idea of a council for understanding the collective actions of those persons who convened, participated in, and accepted the authority of a council. In turn, we need to be alert to ways that events left an imprint on these normative ideas; we need a history of the reception of these ideas in subsequent contexts.

Only when we begin to trace the history of phenomena with a dual character as events and ideas will we begin to see the Theravāda as it truly is: not as an unchanging conceptual system, not as a static structure, but as a complex movement in a perpetual process of constitution and reconstitution. With such a history, we will see the Theravāda *yathābhūtam* — as it was, as it became, as it is.[42]

42. I owe this formulation to John Ross Carter.

The Practical Implications of the Doctrine of Buddha-nature

S. Hookham

Contrary to certain currents of widespread opinion both among Eastern and Western scholars, there are two fundamentally different views of the nature of man, the mind and the spiritual path within the Buddhist tradition, each of which has equal claim to orthodoxy.

In this paper, which is exploratory in nature, I shall briefly outline these two views and then ask the question of what the psychological or social effects of holding one or other of these views might be. The views I have in mind are expressed in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition as the view of self-emptiness and the view of other-emptiness (*rang-stong* and *gzhan-stong*).

The Buddhist doctrine of emptiness[1]

Although it would be a hopeless task to try to explain self-emptiness and other-emptiness in a few words, roughly speaking self-emptiness is the empty nature of illusory phenomena that are not actually there and other-emptiness is the empty nature of reality which actually is there. Although the term ***gzhan-stong*** has become strongly associated with Tibetan Buddhist polemics, originally it was coined together with its complementary term ***rang-stong*** as a means of distinguishing two different kinds of scriptural statement as regards emptiness. This is how the great (yet much maligned) Jonangpa master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen used it in thirteenth-fourteenth century Tibet.

a. Self-emptiness

The term self-emptiness applies when it is said that the ordinary common sense world around us is empty like a dream or an illusion. One immediately focuses on the idea that it lacks reality. One thinks of the fleeting nature of life, how things are insubstantial and likely to disappear at any moment. Self-emptiness means the emptiness of things like this in themselves of themselves as, for example, a dream

1. The following description is based on Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso's 'Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness' which is largely based on Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye's 'Encyclopedia of Knowledge' (*Shes-bya-mdzod*).

1 Upajiva Ratnatunga *Mind and Matter*. Lake House, Colombo 1982.

2 More information on these analogies is contained in my articles 'Aniccam - The Buddhist Theory of Impermanence' and 'Karma - The Ripening Fruit' (for the Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Wheel Nos 186/7 and 221-224). The latter has been reprinted in the *Pali Buddhist Review* 1,1 (London 1976).

3 Saṅgārava-suttam (M 100).

DEVELOPING A SELF WITHOUT BOUNDARIES[1]

Peter Harvey

1. In this article I intend to show how an enlightened person is one who has both overcome the barriers imposed by the 'I am' conceit and ignorance, such that his *citta* (mind/heart) is without boundaries, and also is one who has a very self-reliant nature, being one who lives with 'self' as an 'island', with a 'great' and 'developed self' and who has perfected 'dwelling alone'.

2. We shall proceed, firstly, by outlining how the Buddha recommended his followers to develop a self-reliant, island-like *citta*-self (Paras 3-4), how the eightfold Path is 'self-like' (Para.5), and how those on it have a 'great self' (Paras 6-7), culminating with the Arahant who is 'one of developed self' (Para.8). We shall then deal with the problem of how someone can have a *citta*-self which is both self-contained and without boundaries (Paras 9ff). To do this, we shall first describe how the Arahant is 'unoiled' by anything, 'cut off' from all, dwelling completely 'alone' (Paras 10-12), and then show how he has broken the enclosing barriers of the 'I am' conceit, how he can 'merge' his mind with that of other Arahants, and how he has his mind 'made to be without boundaries' (Paras 13-15). This then enables us to harmonize the two apparently contradictory aspects of the Arahant's *citta* and show the nature of his self-less 'self' (Paras 16-17).

Living with citta as an 'island'

3. Firstly, we can see that the path which leads up to Arahantship is portrayed as one which builds up self-reliance and an inner centre of calm. Thus one finds the following said at D III 58 (cf.D II 100): 'Herein, monks, a monk fares along contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly conscious, mindful, so as to control covetousness and dejection with respect to the world; he fares along contemplating feelings in feelings...*citta* in *citta*...mental objects in mental objects....[2] Thus, monks, a monk lives with himself as an island, with himself as a refuge, with no other (person) as refuge, (he lives) with Dhamma as an island, with Dhamma as refuge, with no other (Dhamma) as refuge[3] (*atta-dīpo viharati atta-saraṇo anaññā-saraṇo, dhamma-dīpo dhamma-saraṇo anaññā-saraṇo*).
Keep to your own pastures (*gocare*), monks, range in your own native

beat (*sake pettike visaye*). Ranging there Māra will not get a chance (*otāraṃ*), he will not get an opportunity (*ārammaṇaṃ*) (for attack). It is thus by reason of undertaking skilful dhammas, monks, that this merit grows'.

4. S V 148-9 explains that what is 'not one's own pasture but another's native beat (*agocaro paravisayo*)' is the five kinds of objects exciting sense-desire (the *kāmaguṇas*), by which the evil Māra 'gets a chance' over one, and that one's 'own pasture' is the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, the foundations of mindfulness. We thus see that monks are recommended to keep aloof, by means of the four *satipaṭṭhānas*, from those things that excite sensual desire, this being what it is to live with oneself and the (taught and practised) Dhamma as 'island' and 'refuge'. One should live quietly overseeing one's body and mind so that one's mind is unperturbed and not excited to desire. The 'attā' which one has as an 'island' is the mind, *citta*, which is a common meaning for 'attā'.[4] That it is, the meaning in the present context can be seen from the S V 148-9 passage. This speaks of a monkey who lives where only monkeys range, but is trapped by a hunter in the area where men also range. The hunter represents Māra, who 'gets a chance' over a person by means of the five *kāmaguṇas*. As the monkey is often used as a symbol for the mind, one can see that this is what should keep to its 'own range' and should be an 'island', so as to be out of Māra's reach. Indeed, at Dhp 40 one reads:

> 'Realizing that this body is as fragile as a jar,
> Establishing this mind (*cittamidaṃ*) as a (fortified) city,
> He should attack Māra with the weapon of wisdom,
> He should guard his conquest and be without attachment
> (*anivesano*)'.

Developing a 'great self (*mahattā*)'

5. The *citta* of one on the Buddhist path, then, should not be at the mercy of outside stimuli, nor of its own moods etc. (the object of the third *satipaṭṭhāna*), but should be an island of calm, imbued with self-control, self-contained. It should no longer be scattered and diffused but should be more integrated and consistently directed towards one goal, Nibbāna. Indeed, at S V 5-6 it is said that a term for the ariyan eightfold Path is 'Dhamma-vehicle (*-yānaṃ*)', with the meaning of this explained in verse:

> 'Who has faith and wisdom, (these) yoked states ever lead him on.
> Shame (*hiri*) is the pole, mind (*mano*) the yoke,
> Mindfulness (*sati*) is the watchful charioteer.
> The chariot is furnished with virtue (*sīla-*),
> *Jhāna* its axle, energy (*-viriyo*) its wheels,
> Equanimity, *samādhi*, its shaft, desirelessness (*anicchā*) its drapery,
> Goodwill, harmlessness and seclusion (*viveko*) are his weapons,
> Endurance is his leather coat of mail:
> (This chariot) rolls on to attain rest from exertion (*yoyujkhemāya vattati*).
> This is oecome aelf-like (*etad attaniyaṃ bhūtaṃ*),
> It is the supreme Brahma-vehicle (*Brahmayānaṃ*),
> (Seated in it) the aelf-relying (*dhīrā*) leaves the world,
> Certainly they win victory'.

Thus the componenta of the Path, integrated into a consistent whole, in a consistent mind-set (*citta*), can be called a Dhamma-vehicle which leads to Nibbāna ('rest from exertion') and which is 'self-like'. It cannot, of course, be a genuine *attā* as it is a composite, constructed entity - the *maggo* is said to be the best of constructed (*saṅkhata*) dhammas (A II 34) - but it is characterised by self-like qualities.

6. The ariyan Path is also described as the way by which 'those with great selves' travel. Thus at It.28-9 (cf. A II 26), the Buddha says of the 'holy life (*brahmacariyaṃ*)' which goes to Nibbāna: 'This is the Path by which those with great selves, great seers have fared (*Esa maggo mahattehi anuyāto mahesino*)...'.

This idea of a 'great self' is amplified at A I 240. Here the Buddha explains that the same small (evil) deed may take one sort of person to hell to experience its fruition (*vipāka*), while another sort of person will experience its fruition in the present life, and not beyond. The first sort of person is described as follows:

'A certain person is of undeveloped body, undeveloped virtue, undeveloped mind, undeveloped wisdom, he is limited, he has an insignificant self, he dwells insignificantly and miserable (*abhāvitakāyo hoti abhāvitasīlo abhāvita-citto abhāvitapañño paritto appātumo appudukkha-vihārī*)'.[5]

131/3

The second sort is described thus:
'A certain person is of developed body, developed virtue, developed mind, developed wisdom, he is not limited, he haa a grest self, he dwells immeasurable (*aparitto mahattā appamāna-vihārī*)'.

This situation is illustrated by aaying that e grain of salt will make a cup of water undrinksble, but not the grest msss of the river Ganges. As the peraon who has a 'grest self' csn still do a small evil action, which brings eome ksmmic fruition, then he must be someone who is not yet en Arahant.[6] As he is of developed virtue and does not experience a kammic fruition in hell, he is probably at lesst a Streem-enterer, however, one who has trsnscended bad rebirths. As for the 'self' which is 'great', this is no metaphysicsl self but the very 'self' which would have been 'ineignificant' when the person in question hed not yet developed hie 'body', virtue, *citta* end wisdom: it muet thus refer to these four qualities.[7]

7. What transforms a pereon'e 'self' from being 'insignificent' to being 'greet' cen cleerly be eeen to be such prectices as the development of lovingkindness (*mettā*) end mindfulness (*sati*). The relevsnce of the first of theae cen be seen from A V 299 where sn sriysn disciple whose *citta*, through *mettā*, is grown great (*mahaggata*) and immessurable (*appamāna*), knowe thet: 'Formerly this *citta* of mine was limited (*parittam*), but now my *citts* ie immeesureble, well developed (*appamānsm subhāvitam*)'. The wording of this shows its relevsnce to the A I 249 pssssage. Ae for the relevence of *ssti*, this can be seen from M I 270, which seye thet one who feels no ettrection or repugnsnce for sny of the six sense-objects, snd who hea mindfulness of the body dwells 'with a mind that is immessurable (*appamānacetaso*)', in contrsst to someone with the opposite quelities who dwells 'with s mind that is limited (*parittacetaso*)' (p.266).

'One of developed self (*bhāvitatto*)'

8. As the path towards Arshantship ia building up s 'great self', and a personality that has 'become self-like', then it is no wonder that the Arahant is called 'one of developed self (*bhāvitatto*)', a title which differentistes him from s 'lesrner (*sekho*)' (It.79-80, cf.It.57 and 69). A long explsnation of this term is found at Nd II 218-9, commenting on its spplication to the Buddha at Sn 1049. Summing up the various strsnds of this explsnation, one can say that for one who is 'bhāvitatto':

(a) virtue, wisdom, the Psth and the facultiee (*indriyas*) are well 'developed (*bhāvita-*)',
(b) 'body' (*kāya*) is 'developed' and 'stesdfeet (*thito*)',
(c) *citta* is 'developed', 'stesdfast', 'well-releesed (*suvimuttam*)' and without ill-will,
(d) he is 'unlimited, great, deep, immessurable, hard to fethom, with much treaaure, ariaen (like the) oceen (*aparitto mahanto gambhīro appameyyo duppariyogālho bahu-ratsno ssgsr'ūpanno*)' (cf.M I 486-7),
(e) in the face of the aix sense-objecte, he hes equenimity and is not confused: he aees only what ie eeen, heere only whet is heard, etc., and hsa no desire-and-ettschment for such sense-objects,
(f) the six senees ere 'controlled (*dantam*)' end 'guerded (*rskkhitam*)',
(g) he is 'eelf-controlled (*attadanto*)' and 'with e well-controlled self (*āttanā sudsntena*)'.

9. The ebove explanation of why someone - e Buddha or Arehant - is 'one of developed self' certeinly showe thet euch e pereon has developed ell the good espects of their pereonelity, but it elso mekes clear that such e pereon hes two groupe of quelitiee that might be seen as in opposition to each other:
(a) he is self-controlled snd has e *citta* thst is not shsken by the input of the senses: he is eelf-conteined,.
(b) he haa s *citts* which hes no limit or meeeure: he hse no boundaries.

How can someone be self-contsined, and yet heve no bounderiee? Before snswering this, we will outline further eepecte of (e) snd (b), so es to provide s good background for en enswer.

The Arahant as self-contsined snd 'dwelling elone'

10. The Arshent's self-conteined neture ie ehown in meny weye. For exsmple, et A I 124 he is described as 'one with e mind like dismond (*vajirūpamacitto*)': his *citts* can 'cut' enything end ie itself uncuttable - it cennot be sffected by snything. Thus, st S II 274, Sāriputta saya that he does not know snything from whose alterstion he would be caused sorrow or *dukkha*, end et Theg 715-7 the Arehant Adhimutta shows complete equsnimity when his life is threetened: the Arahant is not dismsyed by snything. Again, the Arahant is 'unsoiled' by anything. At S III 140 it is aaid that a Tethāgata, like a lotus which 'stende uneoiled by the water (*thāti anupalittam udakena*)' dwelle 'uneoiled by the world

(*anupalitto lokenā ti*)'.[8] Similarly, at Thag 1180, Mahāmoggallāna says of himself, 'he is not soiled (*nopalippati*) by conditioned things (*saṅkhāras*), as a lotus is not soiled by water'. Elsewhere, the image of the lotus or leaf being unsoiled by water is used to illustrate various qualities: 'Thus the sage (muni), speaking of peace, without greed, is unsoiled by sense-desire and the world (*kāme ca loke anupalitto*)' (Sn 845); 'lament and envy do not soil him (*rasmiṃ paridevamaccharaṃ...na lippati*)' (Sn 811); 'thus the muni is not soiled (*nopalippati*) by what is seen, heard or sensed' (Sn 812, cf. Sn 778); 'so you are not soiled (*lippati*) by merit or evil or both' (Sn 547).

Similarly, there is reference to monks 'unsoiled by any material thing (*āmisena anupalittā*)' (M I 319), and to Arahants 'having put evils outside, unsoiled (*bāhitvā pāpāni anupalitto*)' (S I 141). Such passages show that an Arahant is 'unsoiled' by the world or *saṅkhāras* in the sense that he does not react to them with greed, lamentation etc., he has no attachment for them and is unaffected by them.

11. One can see, in fact, that the Arahant is, in a sense, cut off from the world of the six sense-objects. Thus, at M III 274-5, the Buddha outlines a simile: a butcher who cuts off the hide from a dead cow and then drapes it back over the carcase would be wrong to say that, 'This hide is conjoined with the cow as before'. Here, the carcase stands for the six internal *āyatanas* (the senses), the hide stands for the six external ones (the sense-objects) and the tendons and ligaments which are cut stand for 'delight and attachment (*nandirāgass*)'. As attachment is only fully got rid of by an Arahant, the simile surely is meant to apply to him. He is thus portrayed as being such that his senses are in no way tied or bound to their objects. He passes through the world without sticking to it. He is thus one who 'dwells alone (*ekavihārī ti*)', even if he is in the midst of a crowd, for he has destroyed 'delight' and 'attachment' with respect to the six desirable sense-objects (S IV 36-7). Similarly, at S II 283-4, the Buddha tells a monk living alone that to perfect 'dwelling alone (*eka-vihāro*)' he should abandon the past, renounce the future and give up 'desire and attachment (*chandarāgo*)' for what is 'presently (his) personality (*paccuppannesu ca attabhāvapaṭilābhesu*)'.

He then gives a verse:

'Who overcomes all, knows all (*sabbābhibhuṃ sabbavidaṃ*), very wise,
Unsoiled by any dhamma (*sabbesu dhammesu anupalittaṃ*),
Who, letting go of all, is freed in the destruction of
craving (*sabbaṃjahaṃ taṇhekkhaye vimuttaṃ*),
That is the man of whom I say "he dwells alone (*ekavihārīti*)"'.

The Arahant thus dwells totally 'alone' as he has let go of everything, is not 'soiled' by anything. By ending attachment, he has 'abandoned' the *khandhas* (S III 27) and the 'home' which these constitute (S III 9-10).

12. This 'aloneness' seems to apply not only to the Arahant, but also to Nibbāna. 'Seclusion (*viveko*)' is a synonym for *virāga* and *nirodha* (e.g. at S IV 365-8) and as these are themselves synonyms for Nibbāna (e.g. It 88) Nibbāna can be seen as such a 'seclusion'. Thus Nd I 26-7, commenting on this word at Sn 772, says that it can be of three kinds:

(a) of body (*kāya-*): physical seclusion in the form of forest-dwelling,
(b) of mind (*citte-*): this refers to the *citta* of one in any of the eight *jhānas*, or in any of the four ariyan persons - such *cittas* are 'secluded' from various unskilled states,
(c) from substrate (*upadhi-*): this refers to Nibbāna, which is 'seclusion' from 'substrate' in the form of defilements, *khandhas* and *kamma* formations.[9]

There is, indeed, considerable evidence (which cannot be dealt with here[10]), that Nibbāna is a *viññāṇa* (consciousness) which has transcended all objects and thus become objectless and unconditioned. As such, it is 'secluded' from all conditioning objects, and is totally 'alone'.

The Arahant's boundaryless *citta*

13. We now move to examining further aspects under point (b), at Pere.9, that of the Arahant's *citta* lacking boundaries. The Arahant is in several places described in such a way as to suggest that he has broken down all barriers between 'himself' and 'others'. At M I 139 (and A III 84) he is said to have:

(a) 'lifted the barrier (*ukkhittapaligho*)', i.e.got rid of *avijjā* (ignorence),
(b) 'filled the moat (*saṅkiṇṇaparikho*)', i.e.'again-becoming and fering on on birth (*jātisaṃsāro*) is got rid of',

133/3

(c) 'pulled up the pillar (*abūlhesiko*)', i.e. got rid of craving,
(d) 'withdrawn the bolt (*niraggalo*)', i.e. 'the five lower fetters binding him to the lower (shore) are got rid of',
(e) become 'a pure one, the flag laid low, the burden dropped, without fetters (*ariyo pannadhajo pannabhāro visaṃyutto*)', i.e. he has got rid of the 'I am conceit (*asmimāno*)'.

The Arahant can thus be seen as no longer waving the flag of 'I am' and so no longer has boundaries, as he no longer identifies with any particular group of phenomena such as his 'own' *khandhas*. There is no longer ignorance to act as a barrier. Thus the Buddha refers to himself as having broken the 'egg-shell of ignorance (*avijjaṇḍakosaṃ*)' (A IV 176, cf.M I 357). In a similar, but more striking way, the Avadāna-śataka says of the Arahant: 'he lost all attachment to the three worlds; gold and a clod of earth were the same to him; the sky and the palm of his hand were the same to his mind;...; he had torn the egg-shell (of ignorance) by his knowledge...; he obtained the knowledges, the *abhijñās*...'.[11] Again, A II 166 compares the 'break-up (*-pabhedo*)' of ignorance to the 'breach of a dyke (*ālippabhedo*)' which will occur in 'a village pond that has stood for countless years (*anekavassagaṇikā*)' when all the inlets are opened, the outlets blocked and it rains down steadily. Thus ignorance is like a 'barrier' to be lifted, an 'egg-shell' to be broken and the 'dyke' of an ancient pond, to be burst. The Arahant is one who has destroyed such an enclosing boundary.

14. The lack of boundaries to the Arahant's mind is perhaps well illustrated at M I 206-7 (cf.M III 156). Here, the Buddha approaches the monks Anuruddha, Nandiya and Kimbila, greeting them simply as 'Anuruddhas'. He then asks them:

'And how is it that you, Anuruddhas, are living all together on friendly terms and harmonious, as milk and water blend, regarding one another with the eye of affection?'

Anuruddha then replies that this is because he has developed *mettā*, with respect to acts of body, speech and mind, for his companions and thus had gone on to become such that:

'I, Lord, having surrendered my own mind (*sakaṃ cittaṃ nikkhipitvā*), am living only according to the mind of these venerable ones (*āyasmantānaṃ cittassa vasena vattāmi*). Lord, we have diverse bodies (*nānā...kāyā*) but assuredly only one mind (*ekañ ca...cittan-ti*)'.

Anuruddha then explains that they help each other with various

chores and, at p.210, that he knows that his companions have attained all eight *jhānas* and *nirodha-samāpatti* and destroyed the cankers (*āsavas*) as he has read their minds. In this passage, one thus finds three Arahants being regarded as having one *citta* and being all called 'Anuruddha', even though this is the actual name of only one of them. This merging of *cittas* is motivated by *mettā*, a quality which when fully developed means that a person no longer has the barriers that make him prefer his own happiness over that of others [12], and, one must assume, such merging is enabled by the three monks being Arahants, whose *cittas* are no longer enclosed in an 'egg-shell' of ignorance and who no longer wave the flag of 'I am'.

15. The reason why the Arahant's *citta* has no boundaries, why he 'dwells with a *citta* made to be without boundaries (*vimariyādikatena cetasā viharati*)' is explained in a number of places. It is because he is 'escaped from, unfettered by, released from (*nissaṭo visaṃyutto vippamutto*)' the *khandhas*, being like a lotus standing above the water, unsoiled by it (A V 152), because he feels no attraction or repugnance for the objects of the six senses and so is 'independent (*anissito*)', 'released, unfettered' (M III 30), and because he has fully understood the satisfaction of, misery of and 'leaving behind (*nissaraṇaṃ*)' (i.e. Nibbāna, from Ud 80-1) of the *khandhas*, so as to be 'escaped, unfettered, released' (S III 31).

The Arahant's *anattā*, boundaryless, self-contained 'self'

16. The above, then, enables us to resolve the apparent tension outlined at Para.9. It is because an Arahant is so self-contained, having abandoned everything, being 'unsoiled' by anything, without attachment or repugnance for sense-objects, independent, 'dwelling alone', and having experienced Nibbāna, 'seclusion', that his *citta* has no boundaries. *Citta*, being completely 'alone' has no barriers or boundaries. When a person lets go of everything, such that 'his' identity shrinks to zero, then *citta* expands to infinity. Whatever one grasps at and identifies with as 'I am' limits one. As can be seen at Sn 1103 and S I 12, it allows Māra to 'follow' a person and devas and men to 'search' him out. The Arahant, however, does not invest anything with selfhood and so cannot be 'found' anywhere. Though he is completely 'alone', he 'is' no-one, he is a 'man of nothing (*akiñcano*)'. He has broken through the binding-energy of I-centred existence. Thus Sn 501 says of

the 'Brahmin', i.e. Arahant:

> 'Who fare in the world with self as an island (*attadīpā*),
> Entirely released, men of nothing (*akiñcanā sabbadhi vippamuttā*)...'.

17. The Arahant dwells with 'self' (*citta*) as an island, but he knows that 'himself', 'others' and the world are all, equally, *anattā*, and that there is no real 'I am' anywhere: he has nothing on the island, so to speak. Thus Adhimutta was not afraid when his life was threatened as there was no 'I' there to feel threatened afreid, only *dukkha* dhammas (Thag 715-7). Again, the Arahant's senses are 'cut off' from their objects (Para.11) not because he invests identity in his sentient body and shuns all else, but beceuse he sees both, the inner and the outer, es equally *anattā*. He is undisturbed by the world not beceuse he is protected from it by a barrier, but becauae he realizes thet no such barrier exists, sepereting a 'self', an 'I', from 'others'. All is equelly *anattā*, so there are no grounds for I-grasping to arise and give his *citta* limiting bounderies. Peradoxically, by realizing that all he had taken as attā end 'I' is really anettā and insusceptible to control (S III 66-7), the Arahant is no longer controlled by such things - they heve no hold over him - and he is more able to control them - he hes mastery over his mental processes. As Edward Conze says, one aware of things as *anattā* will see that 'possessions possess you, see their coercive power and that "I am theirs" is as true as "they are mine"'. [13] Nyanaponika expresses a similar thought when he says, 'Detechment gives, with regard to its objects, mastery as well as freedom. [14]

18. Summarising the findings of this article, we can thus say the following. The ariyan eightfold Path, when properly integrated into someone's personality, is regarded as 'become self-like' (Para.5) end those on the Path are such as to live with 'self' - *citta* - as an 'island', by means of the Foundations of Mindfulness (Paras 3-4). By such factors as mindfulness and lovingkindness (Pare.7) the Path can be seen as developing the good qualities and strength of a person's personality such that Stream-enterers etc. are referred to as 'those with great selves' (Para.6). At the culmination of the Path atands the Arahant, 'one of developed self', who has carried the process of peraonal development and self-reliance to its perfection (Para.8). He ia thus very self-contained and self-controlled (Para.9), with a 'diamond-

like *citta*, unperturbed and 'unsoiled' by anything (Para.10), with his senses not tied to their objects, one who has perfected 'dwelling alone' by letting go of everything (Para.11) such as the *khandhas*, with no attachment or repugnance, independent (Para.15). He has experienced Nibbāna, the ultimate 'seclusion' (Para.12), the 'leaving behind' of the conditioned world (Para.15). It is because of these aelf-contained qualities that the Arahant is one who has made his *citta* to be without boundaries (Para.16) end has broken the 'egg-shell', burst the ancient 'pond', of ignorance (Pere.13) end is such thet his *citta* can merge with thet of other Arahents (Para.14). He is en independent 'man of nothing' who does not identify with anything es 'I', but who surveys everything, internel end externel, as anattā, such that he (a) is completely 'alone' with 'self' as en islend: he doea not identify with enything, does not 'lean' on anything, is not influenced by enything, as nothing can excite ettechment, repugnence or fear in him end (b) he has e bounderylesa *citta*, not limited by attachment or I-dentification, and immeesurable with such quelities es lovingkindneaa (Peraa 16-17). He hes, then, a developed, boundless 'self', this being, paradoxically, because he is completely devoid of eny tendency to the conceit of 'I am', having realized thet no metephysicel self can be found - that the thought of 'I em' can only erise with respect to factors (the *khandhas*) which cannot possibly give it genuine validity. As seen at Sn 19, he is one whose 'hut', i.e. *citta*, is open and whose 'fire', i.e. ettachment, hetred and delusion, which are centred on the 'I am' conceit, is out.

Notes

1 This article is substantially the same as Chapter 13 of the author's Ph.D. dissertation, 'The Concept of the Peraon in Pāli Buddhist Literature' (University of Lancastar 1981).

2 This is the formula for the four Foundations of Mindfulnaaa, a.g. at M I 56.

3 'Dhamma' is here usad in the aenae of 'teaching' (and its practice), rather than in tha sanse of 'Nibbāne'. It is only in thia former senaa that thare can be an 'other Dhamma': from the Buddhist point of viaw, the 'Dhamma' in the sense of 'Nibbāne' is unique, but there can be different 'Dhammas' in the sense of 'teachings'. Thus, at M I 168, in perauading the Buddha to taach, Brahmā says, 'There hes appeered in Magadhe before you en uncleen Dhamma...', i.e. e perverse teaching. Again, at A I 218, e leyman preises Ānanda's modesty

135/3

in teaching by saying, 'here there is no trumpeting of his own Dhamma (*sadhammukkamsanā*), no depreciating of another's Dhamma (*paradhammāpasādanā*) but just teaching Dhamma (*dhammadesanā*) in its proper sphere'.

4 This can be seen from various parallel passages on attā and on *citta*. For example, Dhp 160 says, 'For with a well-controlled self (*attanā'va sudantena*), one gains a protector hard to gain', while Dhp 35 says, 'a controlled (*dantam*) *citta* is conducive to happiness'. Again, A II 32 talks of 'perfect application of self' (*atta-samā-paṇidhi*) as one of the four things which lead to prosperity, while Dhp 43 sees 'a perfectly applied (*sammā-paṇihitam*)' *citta* as doing for one what no relative can do. That *citta* is not an attā in a metaphysical sense (i.e. it is *anattā*) can be seen from the fact that S V 184 sees it as dependent on *nāma-rūpa* , mind-and-body. A metaphysical attā , on the other hand, would be an independent, unconditioned entity.

5 *Atumo* is the archaic word for attā. Thus Nd I 69 says *ātuma vuccati attā*.

6 Although MA II 361 sees him as an Arahant, being without attachment, hatred and delusion, which are 'productive of the measurable', as seen at M I 298. M I 298, however, does not limit 'immeasurable' states to that of the Arahant's 'unshakeable *cetovimutti*' but says only that this is the 'chief' of these. Others it mentions are the four Brahmavihāras, and the Comy, MA II 354, adds the four *maggas* and the four *phalas* to the list.

7 *Kāya*, or 'body' here, may refer to the *nāma-kāya*, i.e. to the components of *nāma*, or to *nāma-rūpa* as a whole. A 'developed *kāya* ' must be a person's 'body' of mental states or their 'sentient body' when developed by Buddhist practice.

8 Cf. A II 38-9.

9 Cf. Ps II 220 on five kinds of *viveka*, the last, again, being Nibbāna. Similarly, Nd II 251 explains the *vivekadhammam* of Sn 1065 as Nibbāna.

10 See Chapters 10 and 11 of author's dissertation (see Note 1).

11 As quoted and translated by Her Dayel in his *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London 1932; repr.Delhi 1978), p.15-16. On the *abhiññās* as overcoming various berriers, see A III 27-8.

12 See Vism 307-8 and Sn 368 and 705.

13 *Buddhist Thought in India* (London 1962), p.37.

14 *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (London 1969), p.68.

AVANT-PROPOS (1)

PRESENTATION DU RECUEIL D'EKOTTARĀGAMA (2)

Par le Śramaṇa (3) Che Tao Ngan (釋 道 安),
Dynastie des Tsin (晉)
Traduit du Chinois par THÍCH HUYỀN-VI

Il existe quatre recueils d'Āgama (4). La définition de l'appellation "Āgama" a été exposée dans le deuxième recueil, le Madhyamāgama et il nous paraît inutile de la rappeler ici.

Précisons seulement la définition du terme "Ekottara". Littéralement il signifie "[dix] augmenté de un". Que veut dire "augmenté de un"? "Dix" représente l'énumération complète des sujets traités, complète dans leur nombre et dans leur classification par catégories, et la dizaine augmentée de l'unité symbolise la progression susceptible de s'étendre vers l'infini. Ainsi chaque règle édictée par l'enseignement progresse chaque jour, tendant vers la perfection. Pour cette raison, la présent Recueil des Règles de la Doctrine et des Rites servira pour toujours comme des mesures et des modèles en or et en jade pour le salut des êtres vivants.

A l'extérieur du continent indien, les quatre Recueils d'Āgama ont été accueillis avec respect par les habitants des agglomérations citadines ainsi que par les religieux retirés dans les bois et les montagnes.

Le vénérable Śramaṇa Dharmanandin (5), originaire de Takṣaśilā (6), était entré assez tard en religion. Il a consacré le reste de sa vie à étudier les Āgama et il en possédait parfaitement la lettre et l'esprit. Partout à l'étranger ses conférences étaient suivies avec enthousiasme.

En l'an 20 de l'ère Kien Yuan (建 元) des Ts'in (秦), il arriva à la capitale Tch'ang Ngan et tous les habitants, aussi bien les natifs du pays que les résidents étrangers le louèrent pour ses explications des textes des Āgama. Le gouverneur militaire Tchao Wen Ye (趙 文 業) le pria de rendre la connaissance des Āgama accessible au peuple.

A l'entreprise gigantesque de transcription (en langue chinoise) participaient le vénérable Buddhasmṛti comme traducteur et le Śramaṇa Dharmanandin comme correcteur. Elle commença dès la retraite d'été de l'année Kia Chen (甲 申) pour se terminer à la fin du printemps de l'année suivante. Le recueil[d'Ekottarāgama]a été réparti en quarante-et-un fascicules formant deux tomes. Le premier tome comptant vingt-six fascicules est complet par rapport aux textes originaux. Le deuxième tome de quinze fascicules est incomplet : il y manque les gāthā (courts poèmes résumant le contenu de chaque sūtra) (7).

Moi, Dharmanandin, j'ai participé à la correction avec d'autres religieux. Les vénérables Seng Llo (僧 睿) et Seng Meou (僧 茂) ont pu reconstituer et traduire les parties

Fixed in (their view of) individuality[6].
Destined for misery those beings also
Who possess those celestial maidens.

(Jālinī) They know no bliss who see not Nandana[7],
Abode of lordly beings[8], the glorious Thirty(-three).

(Anuruddha) O foolish one, you do not know
The saying of the Worthy One[9]:
'Impermanent are all conditioned things,
Their nature is to arise and pass away;
Having arisen they then cease,
Bliss is being relieved of them'.
There is no dwelling again for me
Within a celestial company's abode, O Jālinī.
Destroyed is perpetually being born[10],
There is now no further birth for me. > page 133

when their term of life ends.

6 Individuality (*sakkāya*, literally 'own-group', 'existing-group'), or the embodiment-view is the identification or association of 'self'-with one or the other of the five aggregates as objects of grasping (*upādānakkhandhā*). Specifically it is not seeing the impermanence of them and imagining oneself to be permanent and stable.

7 A grove or park in the Tāvatiṃsa heaven where the devas sport and amuse themselves.

8 *Naradeva*, literally 'man-god' or 'god of men', i.e. a king. It seems the devas are regarded as the heavenly counterpart of human kings (*rāja*), each having his own seat or 'throne' (*āsana*) and surrounded by a retinue of *devaputtas* ('deva-sons'), maidens, musicians (*gandhabba*) and so forth.

9 *Arahataṃ*, i.e. the Buddha. The famous stanza which follows occurs a number of times in the Canon and is repeated at least three times in the first vagga of the Saṃyutta-nikāya alone.

10 *Jātisaṃsāro*. Being born in Saṃsāra, the perpetual wandering on in conditioned existence; continually being born and dying and suffering.

CONTEMPORARY CHARACTERISATIONS OF THE 'PHILOSOPHY' OF NIKĀYAN BUDDHISM

Peter Harvey

One aspect of contemporary Buddhism is the way that it draws on interpretations of its traditions by contemporary scholars, Buddhist and non-Buddhist. This paper will focus on interpretations of its 'philosophy'. Now while Buddhism is clearly more than a 'philosophy', it is hard to deny that it contains much material of philosophical interest. In recent decades, it has become increasingly of interest to those engaged in 'philosophy' as understood in the Western world. Not only has it been examined as part of the 'philosophy of religion', but its own philosophy has also been examined in its own right, or comparatively. In this process, scholars inevitably seek to characterise Buddhism using familiar philosophical categories. To what extent is this being adequately done, or are distortions and errors being introduced in the process? This paper will focus on this question as it relates to the Buddhism of the five Pāli Nikāyas, conventionally termed 'early Buddhism' by some. In doing so, it will concentrate on issues of the nature and foundations of truth.

A pragmatic theory of truth?

The great Buddhologist Edward Conze was critical of the idea of Buddhism as a coherent body of truths, and claimed that 'statements of Buddhist writers are not meant to be propositions about the nature of reality, but advise on how to act' (1951, pp.16-17). While Buddhism certainly contains much by way of 'advice on how to act', this statement implies that this is all it

contains. This must, in turn, imply that any 'truths' that Buddhism teaches are simply to be seen as useful action-guides. In effect, this is to see Buddhism as having a pragmatic theory of truth: as holding that a belief is true if, and only if, it is useful. Indeed, such a view is held by two recent surveys of 'Buddhist Philosophy', A.L. Herman's *An Introduction to Buddhist Thought* (1983) and D.J. Kalupahana's *A History of Buddhist Philosophy* (1992).

Such a view may be correct as regards Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its idea of (some or all) doctrines as simply 'skilful means' towards liberation, but it seems incorrect as regards the Buddhism of the five Nikāyas. This can be seen from a careful analysis of the Discourse to Prince Abhaya (*Abhaya-rājā-kumāra Sutta*) at M I, 392-6. Here, Abhaya asks the Buddha whether he ever speaks to people in a way that they find disagreeable — such as telling Devadatta that he would be reborn in a hell — implying that, if he does, he is not compassionate. In his reply, the Buddha gets Abhaya to agree that, from compassion, he would himself help a choking baby, even if this caused it to bleed. That is, actions which cause some pain can still be done to help the person pained. The Buddha then goes on to specify what kind of speech (*vāca*) he will utter, due to his compassion for beings (p.395):

i) What 'the Tathāgata knows (*jānāti*) to be not fact, not true, not connected with the goal (*abhūtaṃ atacchaṃ anatthasaṃhitaṃ*)', whether others find it disagreeable or agreeable, he does not utter.

ii) What 'the Tathāgata knows to be fact, true, but not connected with the goal', whether others find it disagreeable or agreeable, he does not utter.

iii) What 'the Tathāgata knows to be fact, true, connected with the goal', whether others find it disagreeable or agreeable, 'a

> Tathāgata is aware of the right time for explaining that speech'.

This passage is of crucial importance in assessing whether the Nikāyas may be seen to have a 'pragmatic theory of truth', i.e. as taking the truth of an utterance as **consisting in** its being useful to some end. From ii) above, though, it is clear that an utterance can be true even when it is not 'connected with the goal', i.e., not spiritually useful. This point is reinforced by a short discourse at S V, 437-8, where the Buddha, in a grove of *simsāpa* trees, says that the number of leaves in the grove are many more than those he holds in his hand:

> Just so, monks, much more is what is known by my higher knowledge (*abhiññāya*), but not declared (*anakhataṃ*); very little is declared. And why, monks, is this not declared by me? Because it is not connected with the goal, is not of the fundamentals of the holy life, it does not conduce to turning away, to detachment, to stopping, to tranquillity, to higher knowledge, to awakening, or to Nibbāna.

He then specifies that what he **has** declared are the Four Noble Truths. The only way the above could be compatible with a pragmatic theory of truth would be if what the Buddha saw himself as knowing as true, but not **spiritually** useful might be 'true' because useful in some **other** ways: a possibility discussed below. What we can, in any case, conclude from the above is that:

i) the Nikāyas' understanding of truth does not accord with a spiritually pragmatic theory of truth, but

ii) they do have a spiritually pragmatic criterion of **what truths are worth teaching** to people.

Kalupahana is thus clearly wrong in seeing the Discourse to Prince Abhaya as actually **proposing** a pragmatic 'criterion for

 138/3

deciding what is true and untrue' (1992, p.51). Similarly, while Jayatilleke (1963, p.358) correctly sees that the Nikāyas have no spritually pragmatic criterion of truth, Herman (1983, p.241) clearly misunderstands him to mean that early Buddhism, while not identifying the true with the useful, 'does claim that what is true must also be useful'. That is, the useful need not be true, but the true is always useful. Jayatilleke, in fact, rightly understands the discourse to say that what is true need not be spiritually useful.

Several writers have sought to derive conclusions from the fact that the Discourse to Prince Abhaya does not even mention any speech which is (known to be) 'not true, not factual, but connected with the goal'. In doing so, they have often drawn different conclusions. Kalupahana holds that, in early Buddhism, 'truth' (*sacca*) meant 'what is available in the present context' (1992, p.47), with the untrue being either impossible or 'confusion' (*musā*), i.e. what was possible but was not so available, having not 'come to be'. He continues, 'What has not yet come to be is not useful to anyone. This is precisely why the discourse does not even mention any alternatives that are untrue and useful at the same time' (1992, pp.51-2). This is a very odd thing to say. If he means that only useful things have ever happened to humans, this is plainly false. If he means that people only ever make useful statements, or think of useful ideas, this is also false. If he means that there are no useful things that have not yet happened, this must also be false.

More straightforwardly, Jayatilleke argues that the Buddha's lack of reference to false but useful statements is because he saw false statements as a 'moral evil', such that it was 'logically or causally impossible' that they should result in what is 'morally advantageous or good (*atthasaṃhitaṃ*)' (1963, p.359). Nevertheless, in considering this position of Jayatilleke's, Rupert

Gethin comments:

> But surely this is to get things the wrong way round: a 'false statement' is a 'moral evil' precisely because it is not helpful for attainment of *nibbāna* — it conduces to suffering rather than its cessation (1992, p.108).

While he sees this as implying that the Nikāyas approximate to a 'pragmatist theory', the quote in fact leaves open what the truth or falsity of a statement consists in, irrespective of what its moral quality is based on.

Let us, though, consider all the possible reasons which might explain why the above discourse does not refer to statements which are false but (spiritually) useful:

a) If a statement is false (independently of any consideration of its usefulness), it is unethical, and therefore cannot be of use in attaining a moral/spiritual goal. An unethical cause can- not contribute to an ethical result.

b) If a statement is false, it is, by definition, also spiritually useless, by a spiritually-pragmatic theory of truth: what is spiritually useful is defined as 'true' and what is spiritually useless is defined as 'false'.

c) If a statement is false, it is, by definition, also totally useless (in any way), by a pragmatic theory of truth: what is somehow useful is defined as 'true' and what is completely use- less is defined as 'false'.

It can be seen by the above discussion of the discourse to Abhaya that b) does not fit the case: for spiritually useless 'truths' are referred to in the Nikāyas. Against c) is a passage at M III, 48, discussing the various forms of wrong speech. Here, lying speech (*musā-vāda*) is explained as being when a person, asked to be a witness in some forum, says that he has seen what he has not seen, or has not seen what he has actually

seen, 'Thus his speech is a knowing lie (*sampajānamusā bhasitā hoti*), either for his own sake or that of another or for the sake of some material (*āmisa*-) gain or other'. This shows that, even though a false report may be seen as useful in some way, it is still to be seen as false. Thus one can hardly say that the Nikāyas hold that 'useful' means the same as 'true'. One who avoids lying speech is said to be a 'truth-speaker (*sacca-vādī*), a bondsman to truth (*sacca-sandho*), trustworthy (*theto*), dependable (*paccayiko*), no deceiver of the world' (M I, 179), and M III, 48 shows that such a 'truth-speaker' avoids lying even though it might serve some 'useful' end. Even Kalupahana seems to recognise this, though it contradicts his pragmatic interpretation. He sees that, as 'the goal is not so far removed or distinguished from the means' . . . 'Thus deception in any form, whether intended to achieve good or bad ends, is not condoned in Buddhism' (p.117). But this is to admit that a deception, i.e. knowingly asserting that what is false is true, e.g., that what has not happened has happened — can sometimes be useful (in a non-spiritual sense). If so, 'useful' does not mean the same as 'true'.

What, then, of a) which says that a statement's being true or false is not dependent on its usefulness or otherwise, but that its ability to contribute to a morally/spiritually useful goal depends on its not being false —? At M III, 47-8, it is said that the kind of vocal conduct to avoid is that which, when followed, 'unwholesome states of mind grow much in him, wholesome states of mind decrease', with vocal conduct which is worth following having the opposite results on states of mind occurring. The instances given of these two types of vocal conduct include lying and telling the truth, when directly asked about what one has seen. Now there does not seem to be any way in which the falsity of saying one saw something when one

did **not** see it can depend on mental results of this verbal action. Such results can only be taken as a way of deciding what kind of actions it is spiritually worthwhile doing or avoiding. As anything which increases unwholesome states of mind in oneself (and others) should be avoided, and lying can be observed to have an unsettling, distorting effect on the mind, it should be avoided. In certain circumstances, even speaking truly (rather than being silent on a matter) can have an unwholesome effect, as in M III, 48's description of a 'frivolous chatterer': 'He utters speech that is not worth treasuring; owing to its being at the wrong time, it is incongruous, has no purpose, is not connected with the goal'. Thus even a truth which is, in principal, spiritually useful may be spiritually non-useful when said in the wrong circumstances[1]; it still remains **true**, though, as do truths which are **always** spiritually useless.

Consideration as to the effect on the wholesomeness or otherwise of the results of an action, then, is simply a criterion for which actions to select for doing or avoiding, just as it is also a criterion for which alms-food or lodgings a monk should use or avoid (M III, 60, same discourse as M III, 48). That is, there is a spiritually pragmatic criterion for selecting which action to do — just as there is a spiritually pragmatic criterion for selecting which truths to teach (as argued above). One could perhaps argue that this means that the Nikāyas have a spiritually pragmatic criterion of what is ethical/unethical (wholesome/unwholesome), if not any kind of pragmatic theory of truth.

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1 In the Discourse to Prince Abhaya, of course, the Buddha says that he teaches what he knows to be true and useful, but only when he is aware of the right time.

In the case of a direct lie, MN III, 48 is clear that its nature is such that it has unwholesome results, and so is always to be avoided (by either truth telling or remaining silent on the matter, depending on circumstances). That is, a) seems to be the best explanation for the fact that the Nikāyas do not refer to statements which are known to be false by the speaker but are still spiritually useful. Deliberate lies always **do** have some spiritually deleterious effects. The nature of reality is such that a deliberate misconstruing of it has bad effects.

Trust your own experience

Any consideration of early Buddhist epistemology must take account of the well-known Kālāma Sutta (A I, 188-93). Here, the Kālāmas of Kesaputta go to listen to the Buddha when he arrives in their locality. They point out that other religious teachers have come to them, each proclaiming their own view and reviling those of others, such as that 'we have doubt and wavering (*vicikicchā*) as to which of these worthies speaks the truth (*saccam*), which falsely (*musā*)'. The Buddha declares that they are right to doubt in such circumstances, and then says:

> Do not accept anything on the grounds of report, or a handed-down tradition or hearsay, or because it is in conformity with a collection (of teachings) (*piṭaka-sampadānena*), or because it is the product of (mere) reasoning (*takka-hetu*), or because of inference (*naya-hetu*), or because of reflection on appearances (*ākāra-parivitakkena*), or because of reflection on and approval of a view (*diṭṭhi-nijjhāna-kkhantiyā*), or because it has the appearance of what ought to be (*bhavya-rūpatāya*), or because (you think) 'this samaṇa is our revered teacher'. When you, O Kālāmas, know for yourselves: 'these dhammas are unwholesome and blameworthy, they are condemned by the wise (*viññugarahitā*); these dhammas, when accomplished and undertaken, conduce to harm and suffering', then indeed you should reject them (p.189).

The Buddha then gets them to agree that greed, hatred and delusion are each harmful to a person when they arise within him. Being overcome by any of them, he kills, steals, commits adultery, lies, and leads others to do likewise, such that he suffers for a long time (due to the karmic results of his actions, in this life or beyond). These dhammas are thus to be seen as unwholesome, blameworthy, condemned by the wise and 'when accomplished and undertaken, conduce to harm and suffering'. Contrastingly, the Kālāmas are then led to agree that the arising of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion is beneficial to a person, such that he is not caused by greed etc. to kill etc.[2]. The Buddha then describes an ariyan disciple who, 'without covetousness, without ill-will, unbewildered (*asammūḷho*), mindful and fully aware' radiates lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity in all directions, with his heart 'without enmity or oppression, untainted and purified'. Such a disciple can be reassured that:

i) If there is another world beyond death, and actions have karmic results, he will attain a heavenly rebirth.
ii) If there is no world beyond death, and actions have no karmic results, 'yet in this very life do I hold myself without enmity or oppression, sorrowless and happy'.

In this discourse, the Buddha advises on how to avoid a state of doubt as a result of meeting a set of conflicting views. It is clear, though, that the Buddha does not here use his criteria

2 In a parallel passage at A II, 193, restraint of greed etc. is recommended as it leads to not doing a greedy etc. deed of body, speech or mind.

to recommend specific **doctrines**, but to recommend **dhammas** in the sense of certain states of mind: non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion. Of these, the first two are clearly affective, non-cognitive states, developed to a high degree through loving-kindness etc. Here, no views or assertions are being supported or opposed. They only become cognitively relevant when claims are made as to their results, and the Buddha emphasises that such claims can be directly tested, being true whether or not views on karma and rebirth are true. The emphasis here is: do it, and see the effect, not believe it and see the effect.

When it comes to non-delusion, it is ambiguous as to whether the Buddha is recommending this simply in the sense of a state of mindful clarity, or as a state with a specific cognitive content. In the Suttas, no specific content is given to delusion, though the Cullaniddesa, a lateish part of the fifth Nikāya, equates it with spiritual ignorance (*avijjā*), and explains it as a lack of knowledge (*aññāṇa*) of the Four Noble Truths (p.98, as at Vibhaṅga 362). Non-delusion would thus be **knowledge** of the Four Noble Truths. This says more than, though is a natural extension of, what is said in the Suttas: for clarity of mind can be seen to lead naturally to the arising of knowledge.

The emphasis of the Kālāma Sutta, though, is on taking up those **states of mind** which one can experientially confirm to have a beneficial effect on the morality of one's actions, and happiness of one's experiences. This can be seen as a morally pragmatic criterion of what to **do** (mentally) rather than of what is true. In a parallel passage (M I, 403-4), though, such a pragmatic criterion is extended to what it is best to believe (in the absence of personal **knowledge**). Here it is said that one who believes in karma and rebirth etc. (i.e. worldly 'right view') avoids wrong conduct (of body, speech and mind) and takes up right conduct, whereas those who believe the opposite avoid

right conduct and take up wrong conduct. If rebirth etc. exists:

i) the believer can take comfort that he will be reborn in a heaven and, in this life, be praised by the wise for acting morally;
ii) the non-believer can expect to be reborn in a hell, and to be condemned by the wise.

If, on the other hand, there is no rebirth:

i) the believer will at least be praised by the wise,
ii) while the non-believer can (as a sole consolation) count himself 'safe' after death.

All in all, if one does not yet know the truth, it is the 'best bet' to believe in rebirth etc.

Nevertheless, other passages show that using the Kālāma Sutta general approach can lead to actual knowledge of what is true — such truth not being dependent on 'usefulness'. At S II, 115-16, Musīla says that he has personal (*paccatta*) knowledge (*ñāṇa*):

> apart from trustful confidence (*saddhāya*), apart from inclination, apart from report, apart from reflection on appearances, apart from reflection on and approval of a view.

His knowledge is such that he can say 'I know this, I see this', as regards how each of the twelve links of Conditioned Arising are conditioned and come to cease. Here, the list of potential knowledge-routes is very similar to that which the Kālāma Sutta sees as unreliable. By implication, the Kālāma Sutta approach can lead to the attainment of such direct knowledge.

The correspondence theory of truth

While the Nikāyas use a pragmatic criterion in some respects, it has been seen that they do not judge truth by such a criterion. As is becoming apparent, their main criterion of truth is cor-

respondence with the facts, with the way things are. This can be seen in regard to the most central of the Nikāyas' teachings, the Four Noble Truths. Now these have sometimes been seen[3] as not truths to be cognitively known, but things to be done, to attain a certain end. In the Buddha's first sermon, it is said that the (subject of the) first of the four Truths is to be 'completely known' (*pariññāta*), the second to be 'given up', the third to be 'realised' (*sacchikata*) and the fourth to be 'developed' (S V, 422). The appropriate response to the first Truth is, though, a cognitive state, just as it is probably also to the third. Moreover, to make any of the four reponses, though, certain truths must be acknowledged: e.g. to give up craving, it needs to be recognised that this actually leads to *dukkha*. Of course, to recognise something as *dukkha* is partly to have an evaluation of it, but it it not purely evaluative, for there is also a descriptive, factual content in the recognition, too.

It is apparent, then, that the Nikāyas' theory of truth is that it consists in correspondence with fact, as Jayatilleke maintains (1975, p.43). He points to M I, 402 as clearly showing this:

> And because there is indeed a world beyond, . . . if anyone utters the speech 'There is not a world beyond', it is a wrong speech (*miccha-vācā*) of his.

3 e.g. by Kalanasuriya, p.288. Kalupahana is not too clear on the status of the Four Noble Truths. He sees them as 'psychological truth' (1992, p.85) which are not to be 'distinguished from untruth or falsehood primarily on the basis of cognitive validity or rational consistency, in terms of correspondence or consistency'. Nevertheless, they are 'factual truths with moral relevance'. It seems that, for him, they are 'factual truths' in terms of a pragmatic criterion of truth, for they are 'noble' because they are 'fruitful'. Such a pragmatic criterion of truth has already been seen not to apply in the Nikāyas.

Admittedly, Jayatilleke (*ibid.*) translates *micchā* as 'false' rather than 'wrong', but as the first kind of wrong speech is false speech (*musā-vāda*), this makes little difference to the implication of the passage, as to the falsity being in disaccord to the facts. Jayatilleke also rightly points out (1975, pp.44-5) that consistency or coherence is also a necessary, though not sufficient criterion for truth in the Nikāyas. He thus cites passages, M I, 232 and S IV, 298, where pointing out the inconsistency of two statements of a debating partner is used as a way of refuting them.

Buddhist 'empiricism'

If the Nikāyas see truth as primarily consisting in correspondence with the facts, the key way to find what these are is through experience. In accordance with this emphasis on experience — normal (as clarified by meditation), and meditation-based paranormal — it is not surprising that some scholars, such as K.N. Jayatilleke, have seen (early) Buddhism as a form of 'empiricism'. That is, as a view which takes experience as the touchstone of truth.

F. J. Hoffman, though, citing the Buddha's discouragement of 'speculative views' and non-acceptance of *takka* ('argument and counter-argument'), argues that the Buddhist perspective cannot be one of empiricism, which is a 'particular theory of knowledge, up for argument and counter-argument' (1987, pp.96-7). In fact, the Nikāyas have no shortage of critical arguments against non-Buddhist views (e.g. 'feeling is Self'), including views that tradition or reason alone are sound sources of knowledge. Experience, and careful induction based on it, are left uncriticised, to try in a pragmatic way.

In arguing against the 'Buddhist empiricism' thesis, Hoffman particularly focuses on Jayatilleke's claim (1963, p.466) that two

of the 'higher knowledges' (*abhiññās*) can be seen to 'verify' the doctrines of rebirth and karma. First of all, he challenges the idea of Buddhism having a 'rebirth doctrine' (p.93). He accepts that it has such a 'doctrine' if what is meant is simply a 'picture', i.e. a way of seeing, with no 'propositional' content. He denies it has such a 'doctrine', though, if what is meant is 'a theory to be defended with argument', given the Buddhist 'condemnation of *diṭṭhi* as speculative view', amplifying this by saying that it does not have a 'specific philosophical theory' on rebirth-related matters such as the relation between the 'soul' (i.e. *jīva*) and body. Hoffman's view, though, here depends on a false dichotomy. It is clear that there is a definite content to many of the Buddhist statements on rebirth; nevertheless, these claims are not generally based on argument but on certain types of experience. If early Buddhism is silent on some theoretical issues regarding rebirth, this does not mean it has no theory at all.

Hoffman emphasises that Buddhism cannot be a strong form of 'empiricism', as this insists that, unless a statement is open to possible falsification by evidence, it does not make a meaningful factual claim (p.97). In an article, 'The Buddhist Empiricism Thesis' (1982), he develops a parable of two bhikkhus who see Buddhism as containing verifiable truths, and so both set out to meditate under the same teacher in order to carry out such verification. After five years, one of them says that he has verified the doctrine of rebirth, but the other says he has not yet verified it. After a further twenty years, the same situation pertains. When the second bhikkhu says to the teacher that the rebirth doctrine is falsified, the teacher laughs and tells him to meditate more. He therefore concludes that, 'if the teacher will not allow any of my experience to count *against* the rebirth doctrine, then I do not see how anything could count *for* it either. If you can't falsify it, then you can't

verify it either' (1982, pp.155-6). Hoffman agrees with the view of the second bhikkhu and takes the parable to show that Buddhism should not be seen as about verifiable facts: it is 'experiential', but not 'experimental', for this overlooks the role of 'unconditional devotion' in any religion (*ibid.*, p.156). Hoffman's analysis, though, is faulty on the following grounds:

i) While devotion (not unconditional devotion) clearly has an important role in Buddhism, it is not claimed that only Buddhists (e.g. D I, 19), or even only those who are religious, can confirm the rebirth doctrine through meditative or other experience (cf. Ian Stevenson's data on children with apparent memory of past lives).

ii) For Buddhist meditators, devotion does — as an empirical, psychological fact — enhance the meditative process, but this does not mean that experiential 'confirmation' of the rebirth doctrine is nothing more than a way-of-seeing dictated by devotion. Devotion, as expressed in *saddhā*, or 'trustful confidence', is a positive affective attitude which grows from assessing the qualities of a teacher and then facilitates other developments, culminating in actual knowledge (M III, 171-6).

iii) It has never been claimed that many meditators do or can swiftly verify the rebirth doctrine — it is seen as an advanced achievement. Therefore it would in principle be possible to specify all the internal psychological, meditative conditions that would need to be met in order for a meditator to be able to 'remember past lives'. In the case of the second bhikkhu in the parable, it could simply be said that he had not been able to develop these conditions, and so he had been unable either to verify or falsify the doctrine.

Strictly speaking, the latter point does not itself make rebirth claims falsifiable, but makes falsifiable claims about what

experiences will be had under certain meditative conditions. A falsifiable claim about rebirth might be, for example, that after the death of certain kinds of people — those who have behaved so as to have karma for another human life — at least some people could be found that have — spontaneously as children, or under hypnosis, or though meditation — what appear to be accurate detailed memories of such a dead person's past human life. Though it would not be easy to conduct such an experiment, a Buddhist would see it as in principle possible if one wished to do so.

Hoffman claims that 'a characteristic of distinctly religious beliefs is their unfalsifiablity in principle', because they have no assignable 'truth-value' (1987, p.98) that can be challenged by reference to empirical facts (p.97). As such, they can only be seen as a way of seeing and thinking which makes no empirical claims. A clear refutation of this, for Buddhism, would be, for example, its teaching that 'all beings subsist by nutriment' (Khp IV): this could be falsified if someone could point to a life-force that had no need of any kind of food.

Anti-foundationalist, pragmatic, radical empiricism?

If Hoffman sees early Buddhism as a faith-based view-of-the-world, rather than an 'empiricism', Kalupahana has come, in his recent *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*, to see it as a pragmatic 'radical' empiricism (1992, p.87), putting forward spiritually useful teachings which are based on human experience, but not claimed to be true-for-all-time. Rather, early Buddhism 'provided a definition of truth that is non-absolutistic, thereby leaving room for its modification in the light of future possibilities' (p.91). This is partially due to Kalupahana's view that the Nikāyas deny that a completely objective, perspective-free knowledge is possible.

Does early Buddhism propose any 'timeless truths'? In several passages, certain things are each said to stand (*ṭhita*) as 'an element, a dhamma-stability, a dhamma-orderliness' 'whether the Tathāgatas arise or whether the Tathāgatas do not arise':

i) That all *saṅkhāras* are impermanent and *dukkha*, and all dhammas not-Self (A I, 286).

ii) 'Specific conditionality' (*ida-ppaccayatā*), i.e. Conditioned Arising, in terms of each of the twelve *nidānas* acting as a condition for the next (S II, 256).

For each of these it is said that the Tathāgata comes to know it and teaches it. Such passages clearly posit things which are true irrespective of particular contingent events. Kalupahana, though, comments on such passages that what is referred to *'has remained valid so far'* (1992, p.55), a limited claim, not one to a timeless truth. Of course, without the arising of Tathāgats or others to observe carefully the nature of things, the reference to 'so far' would be meaningless. Kalupahana makes such passages say: even if no Tathāgatas had lived, insofar as they had, they would have known certain things. Hoffman, in recognising that there is a claim, here, to a timeless truth, sees this as counter-evidence to the 'Buddhist empiricism' thesis (1987, p.95). For him, it 'shows that the truth of a doctrinal "view" is never contingent on a man's realization: although checking is not irrelevant, it takes on a different form from checking a proposition or hypothesis', this being because when someone checks out a religion to find if there is anything 'in it', this is partly a matter of what the person 'brings with him' to the search. Buddhism would see this, though, as simply a matter of being sufficiently developed and sensitive to know certain things. Perhaps the most one can say here is that what is being said is:

i) A Tathāgata's knowing of a truth does not contaminate or distort it by his 'perspective' (this against Kalupahana's

'perspectivism').

ii) The truth was 'there' to be discovered before it was discovered — in this respect, an empirical 'seeing' of that truth is not the criterion for it being true, but for it being known as true.

iii) While this is not exactly an empiricist criterion for what truth is, it claims that repeated empirical investigation was sufficient for the Buddha to be confident that the constitution of observable reality was such that the above truths would always be found to be so.

What of the question of whether early Buddhism believes in a timeless reality? The obvious candidate for this is Nibbāna, but Kalupahana does not see it this way. A famous passage at Udāna 80-1 states:

> Monks, there exists an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unconstructed (*ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ*). Monks, if that unborn . . . were not, there would not be apparent the leaving behind, here, of the born, become, made, constructed.

Kalupahana sees this as just about the 'possibility of freedom' (1992, p.93), not a reality beyond 'birth' and time. Such a possible state of freedom is that of an enlightened person, due to the destruction of the *āsavās* (*ibid.*, p.123). Moreover, Kalupahana regards the term *abhūtaṃ* ('not-become') as indicating a state where there is the 'negation' of certain 'events that have already occurred' and the suffering caused by them (*ibid.*, p.92-3), i.e. the negation of past 'birth . . . becoming . . . making or doing . . . and dispositions'. This is an awkward interpretation, for if 'born' and 'become' mean 'has been a (recent) event in time', as Kalupahana seems to think, then the enlightened state, if it has no timeless aspect to it, is merely another event in time and would also be 'born' and 'become'.

145/3

A key aspect of Kalupahana's view of Nibbāna is that its being *asaṅkhata* means that it is 'not dispositionally-conditioned' (*ibid.*, p.92), but not that it isn't still 'dependently arisen' (p.93). That is, he sees it as a state which is conditioned, but not conditioned by *saṅkhāras*, which he translates as 'dispositions'. In fact, an Itivuttaka passage (pp.37-8) shows that this is not so. Explaining the above Udāna passage on the 'unborn', it says that this concerns the 'leaving behind' of 'the unborn, become, co-arisen (*samuppanaṃ*), made, constructed' being itself 'unborn' **not co-arisen** (*asamuppanaṃ*). Now, if Nibbāna is not 'co-arisen', it cannot be 'dependently co-arisen' (*paṭicca-samuppana*). Indeed, D III, 275 explicitly says that 'whatever is become, constructed, arisen from conditions (*paṭicca-samuppanaṃ*), the leaving behind of that is stopping (*nirodho*)', 'stopping' being a common synonym for Nibbāna. So, early Buddhism would thus seem to claim some timeless truths and to posit a timeless reality (Nibbāna).

Implications for the contemporary Buddhist

From the point of view of an ordinary contemporary Buddhist, how might this whole discussion be relevant? For one thing, it has implications for how a Buddhist might assess traditional Buddhist teachings as to their truthfulness or worth. If the Buddha is seen as having taught only what he saw as true and spiritually useful, then:

i) If one has an attitude of trustful confidence (*saddhā*) towards the Buddha, then one has one reason, at least, for expecting (but not knowing) that what he taught on any topic is true.

ii) But over 2,000 years after the Buddha's demise, one cannot be sure that what a textual tradition claims that he said was actually said by him.

iii) If one finds that a teaching attributed to the Buddha is also found to be spiritually useful, it increases the likelihood that this was taught by the Buddha, and thus is a likely candidate for truth.

iv) One could not conclude that a spiritually useful statement definitely is true, only that **the Buddha** would have seen it as true.

v) If something can be independently known to be true, and it is also found to be spiritually useful, then it is very likely that it was taught by the Buddha, or that (if it concerns something that it would be anachronistic to say the Buddha knew about) he would have approved of it.

vi) Some things the Buddha knew may not originally have been useful but became so later, so that he did not teach them during his lifetime, or did so to a small group of disciples. This would be a way of validating later, Mahāyāna, teach- ings.

Much of the above depends on having a clear way of deciding/knowing if something is spiritually useful. One is thus thrown back on the kind of criteria that the Buddha outlined. However, one may see these criteria as eminently reasonable and be happy to use them, irrespective of whether the Buddha actually taught these, or taught other things traditionally attributed to him.

What might the early Buddhist perspective say about the Mahāyāna idea of 'skilful means' in cases where this involves giving teachings which are not straighforwardly true? In most cases, this is an instance of something not being the whole or full truth. Early Buddhism certainly accepts that something can be partially true, as in the parable of the blind men and the elephant (Udāna 68), where various blind men each feel part of an elephant and mistakenly think its qualities pertain to the

whole elephant. The idea of something being **partially** true and useful, and yet worth-teaching, perhaps does not put too much strain on the spirit of the Discourse to Prince Abhaya.

In any case, many Buddhist teachings are in the form of guidance as to how to do certain things, without any (explicit) assertions as to the truth of certain statements. In this case, a criterion of spiritual pragmatism alone can be used to assess the worth of such practices, wherever they come from. Nevertheless, practices which a Buddhist might wish to borrow from other religions might need assessing for implicit truth claims in tension with Buddhism, as well as carefully assessing in terms of their various effects.

A particular kind of practice is that of using a story as a basis for a visualisation, or moral reflection, for example. In the case of a novel, we are quite happy to see it as neither 'true' nor 'false' but simply as a story — entertaining or thought provoking. If a myth offers no cognitive truth content, then perhaps Buddhism would be right to judge it purely by the criterion of spiritual pragmatism, so as to use it if doing so has spiritually beneficial results.

The question remains, though, of whether Buddhism contains any such non-cognitive 'myths'. It would seem that the Mahāyāna does, for example the story of Avalokiteśvara's head exploding when, on seeing so many beings suffering in the hells, his vow to save all faltered. What of early Buddhism? There is much material that a modern person might see as purely mythic, though its textual context portrays it as actually having happened, perhaps in some past life. Three types of example from a broad spectrum spring to mind:

i) the fully elaborated life story of the Buddha,

ii) stories of past 'wheel-turning' (*cakkavatti*) emperors (e.g. D

III, 58-9),

iii) the story of eclipses being caused by the demon Rāhu eating the sun and moon, so that they called out to the Buddha for help, and he responded by telling Rāhu to release them (S I, 50-1).

The first kind of story is elaborated on an historical core. Even where mythic elements are introduced, as in the story of Gotama seeing the 'four signs' for the first time, instead of gradually reflecting on these, as in the earliest version, one can generally see what is being said. In this case, a person's shocked, existential reflection on the actuality of death etc. is being portrayed. As regards the second type of story:

a) A modernist might see it simply as a story which he or she finds hard to use or relate to, except in regard to the moral points it illustrates.

b) A traditionalist might see it as either true or as a powerful story, and learn to use it as a way of enhancing both moral and meditative development, e.g. by contemplating the thirty-two characteristics that the Buddha and a *cakka-vatti* emperor are said to share, and noticing the effect in doing so.

As regards the third kind type of story, responses to it might vary:

a) A modernist Buddhist might see it as based on falsehood, and so not really taught by the Buddha, or perhaps taught by the Buddha simply due to his picking up some culturally conditioned beliefs.

b) A traditionalist might say that, as it seems to have been taught by the Buddha, it is likely to be — in some sense — true, and to be spiritually useful, though someone of the modern world may now find it hard or impossible to use

the story fruitfully.

c) Either a modernist or traditionalist might see it simply as a story, with no truth content, that originated as a way of glorifying the Buddha, but which we now find hard or impossible to 'use'.

All in all, one can say that the Nikāyas offer:

i) A correspondence theory of truth (backed up by the necessity of coherence), with truth being discovered by personal experience.

ii) The way to attain such personal experience is initiated by placing trust in a teacher who can be seen to be free, or relatively free, of greed, hatred and delusion. From there on in, it is increasingly a matter of listening, then trying and testing.

iii) In the case of actions and states of mind, a pragmatic criterion is recommended as to which to do or take up, or to avoid.

iv) This is even applied to the holding of beliefs (a form of mental action): a person is recommended to believe what produces spiritually beneficial effects, though acknowledge that he does not know what is true unless and until he has had direct personal experience of it.

v) Some beliefs, such as karma and rebirth, may only be confirmed by certain advanced practitioners with great mastery of meditative states.

vi) Nevertheless, all who reach the end of the path can personally confirm the Four Noble Truths and know that *dukkha* applies to every conditioned state, for all time. They also experience Nibbāna as a timeless, unconditioned reality.

vii) As regards what the Buddha taught — and what Buddhist

(9) teachers should teach — he used a spiritually pragmatic criterion to select, from what he knew to be true, those things that he would, in the right circumstances, teach. He avoided teaching anything he knew to be false but, arguably, taught certain story material which was neither true nor false.

viii) In this, one can see a spiritually pragmatic criterion for the worth of knowledge or truth.

Overall, one can see this as giving:

a) a *spiritually pragmatic* criterion for *actions* — physical, mental or verbal, including what truths to teach — but
b) a *correspondence* criterion of *truth*, founded on an empirical basis which includes meditative as well as sense-experience.

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< page 108 Comment on Anuruddha Sutta (J. Ireland)

The question might well arise as to whether these visitations, such as that of Jālinī, of devas in general and, in either instances, those of Māra, should be regarded literally. Or are they merely symbolic, literary, poetic or teaching devices? It is difficult for us living in another age and another culture to appreciate the thought-processes of those persons living two and a half millennia ago. It is probable that they did not have the sharp distinctions we have between the symbolic and the actual, between subjective and objective experience. It is likely that these distinctions did not apply and the two tended to coalesce. Another problem is that what is being described is the experience of an arahant whose thought-processes are beyond the range of unenlightened beings even in their own culture.

Non-Conceptuality, Critical Reasoning and Religious Experience. Some Tibetan Buddhist Discussions

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The Dalai Lama is fond of quoting a verse attributed to the Buddha to the effect that as the wise examine carefully gold by burning, cutting and polishing it, so the Buddha's followers should embrace his words after examining them critically and not just out of respect for the Master. A role for critical thought has been accepted by all Buddhists, although during two and a half millennia of sophisticated doctrinal development the exact nature, role and range of critical thought has been extensively debated.[1] In general doctrinal difference in Buddhism has been seen as perfectly acceptable, reflecting different levels of understanding and therefore different stages on the path to enlightenment. Buddhism has tended not to look to or expect doctrinal orthodoxy, although there has always been a much stronger impetus towards ortho*praxy*, and common (largely monastic) code and behaviour has perhaps played a comparable role in Buddhism to common belief and creed in some other religions.[2] Nevertheless an acceptability of doctrinal divergence has not lessened the energy and vigour devoted to lengthy and sometimes fiercely polemical debate between teachers and schools. This was nowhere more so than in Tibet, where doctrinal debates—sometimes lasting all night—to the present day form the central part of a monastic education in most of the largest Tibetan monastic universities.[3]

From the beginning the Buddhist tradition has characterized enlightenment as 'seeing things the way they really are' (*yathābhūtadarśana*), a seeing which differs in some crucial way from a perception of the way things appear to be to the unenlightened

[1] I have further discussed this theme in a different context in Williams, 1991.

[2] For the importance of these points in appreciating certain major developments in the history of Buddhist thought from about the second century B.C.E. onwards, associated with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism see Williams, 1989, ch. 1.

[3] Since the Chinese takeover in 1959, and subsequent destruction of nearly all Tibetan monasteries, these great monastic universities have been re-established in India, particularly in Karnataka.

person. This gap between appearance and reality of course raises essentially philosophical questions, even if they are embedded in a wider framework which we are pleased to call religious and which involves characteristic Buddhist forms of psycho-physical practice. Rivals in debate, even one's co-religionists, do not see things the way they *really* are. In the final analysis their perspective falls short of the complete path to enlightenment, and compassion requires discussion. What we would call philosophical investigation and understanding has always been characteristic of Buddhism, and we know that Hindus too saw one of the characteristics of the Buddha himself as his employment of reasoning and logic in order to question the traditions of Brahmanical orthodoxy.[4]

Yet 'seeing things the way they really are' is an unclear and ambiguous way of speaking. Suppose I am a latter-day Sherlock Holmes, and I reason through genius and perhaps a little gentle experiment that Archibald is the thief. We have here a case of *knowing that* Archibald is the thief; I see that really it is Archibald who is the thief and not Jemima as everyone including myself previously thought. This mode of seeing things the way in which, in this context, they really are clearly differs from the case of my happening to see Archibald stealing the suet pudding with my very own eyes. Yet either mode could be said to be 'seeing things the way they really are'; either could contribute to a conviction in a court of law, and neither need imply the other. Buddhist thought has always evinced a tension, sometimes manifest in institutional differences, between the claim to know that something is the case through critical analytic investigation—as mental events go, a perfectly normal sort of event—and the knowing of the way things really are which seems to accompany or is said to be identical with a particular sort of direct experience, a gnosis claimed to be incontrovertible and identified as an essential experiential element in what is called 'enlightenment', in other words, a *para*normal mental state. The problem which rears its head again and again in Buddhist thought, and provides a thread running through all the immense literature of Tibetan Buddhism, is that of determining the exact relationship between these two 'modes of knowing' given that the knowing which proceeds from critical investigation must by virtue of its linguistic basis require the use of concepts, while the highest form of experiential knowing, our paranormal mental state, the *sine qua non* of enlightenment, is held in some important sense to be direct, non-linguistic and—as it is usually expressed in translations into English—non-conceptual.

[4] See, for example, the Hindu myth of the origins of the Buddha's appearance on earth in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, trans. in O'Flaherty, pp. 231–5.

The problem was there from the very beginnings of Buddhism in Tibet. We are told that in the eighth century C.E. there took place a great debate (or series of debates) in the presence of a Tibetan emperor. The protagonists were an Indian teacher of the school of Madhyamaka Buddhist philosophy named Kamalaśīla, and a Chinese monk called Mahāyāna, who seems to have been a follower of some form of Ch'an.[5] The differences between Kamalaśīla and the monk Mahāyāna are often discussed in later Tibetan literature, almost invariably to the disparagement of Mahāyāna who is agreed by Tibetan sources to have lost the debate. And yet it is important here to see what they have in common. Mahāyāna begins by telling us that everything is generated by a *vikalpa* of the mind (*thams cad sems kyi rnam par rtog pas bskyed pas*).[6] The word *vikalpa* is one of a range of Sanskrit words associated in Buddhist thought with construction, usually conceptual and linguistic, and with the falsification of what some Buddhist writers (but not all) would claim is given immediately in preconceptual experience. *Vikalpa* in particular is associated with discrimination in terms of binary categories *x*/not-*x*, a reification of experience in terms of opposition, an hypostatization which is thought to create the framework for suffering which for all Buddhists is the very nature of unenlightenment—*saṃsāra*—and arises in part at least from our inveterate mental tendency to grasp and attempt to hold that which naturally changes.[7] When Mahāyāna says that *all* arises from this dichotomizing discrimination he undoubtedly means all *saṃsāra*, all unenlightenment.[8] Enlightenment therefore lies in reversing the binary hypostatizing operations of the mind. Kamalaśīla does not disagree with the primacy of binary hypostatization in the process of unenlightenment. He states quite clearly that 'that absence of dichotomizing discrimination is the Dharmadhātu—Ultimate Expanse—which is the essence of all phenomena' (*chos thams cad kyi rang bzhin chos dbyings rnam par mi rtog pa de*: Houston, 1980, p. 19). In other words (ignoring for the moment an imprecision which would make a mental state here *itself* the ultimate truth) a mental state where there is no such discrimination is indeed in

[5] Better known by its Japanese name of 'Zen', although Mahāyāna's Ch'an should not necessarily be identified with any form of Zen found in Japan, past or present.

[6] From the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* of dPa' bo gtsug lag. Text supplied in G. W. Houston, 1980, p. 18.

[7] On the meaning of *vikalpa*, and the whole range of other 'construction terms', see Williams, 1980.

[8] As is stated in the *Bhavasaṃkrāntiparikathā* verse 5, attributed to the great Indian scholar Nāgārjuna: *'jig rten rnam par rtog las 'byung. 'Jig rten* here refers to *loka*, the world, but it is undoubtedly *loka* in opposition to supramundane (*lokottara*), i.e. world as unenlightenment. See Sastri, 1938.

some fundamental sense identifiable with—or constitutes an essential characteristic of—enlightenment. But Kamalaśīla shrinks from drawing the conclusion which Mahāyāna is reputed to have derived from his initial starting point—that enlightenment apparently lies in the cutting of all mental activity, not to mention moral activity or religious practice: 'Whoever does not think anything, does not do anything—that person will be completely liberated from unenlightenment' (*gang zhig ci la yang mi sems zhing ci yang mi byed pa de 'khor ba las yongs su thar bar 'gyur ro*). Mahāyāna means what he says. One should not think anything (*ci la yang mi sems*), not examine anything (*ci la yang mi rtog*), and not investigate anything (*ci la yang mi dpyod*). Enlightenment is a mental state in which there is no mental act, and thus *de facto* the acts which engender unenlightenment are eliminated.[9]

Mahāyāna's antipathy towards the binary hypostatization of dichotomizing discrimination is just one aspect in Buddhist thought of a frequently expressed unease about the way our minds make sense of the world of incoming sensory data, a making-sense which is also thought to create a basis and framework for the enslavement and suffering which flows from misunderstanding the nature of things. A further and broader category of mental act often viewed with antipathy is that of *saṃjñā*, and our Tibetan sources also see Mahāyāna's conclusions arising from his advocacy of a paranormal mental state attained through meditation where *saṃjñā* has been negated (Houston, 1980, text p. 25). *Saṃjñā* is said to produce dichotomizing discrimination. I have discussed this notion of *saṃjñā* at great length elsewhere.[10] To summarize: The term *saṃjñā* designates the mental act of apprehending *x* to be a case of '*x*'. That is, in the case of the perception of a blue object, an object is seen to be qualified by the sign (*nimitta*) blue, and this is capable of being linguistically articulated by the statement '*x* is blue'. The *saṃjñā* is the mental act which sees *x* to be a member of the class 'blue objects' as a result of the apprehension of a sign, which stands as a sign of class-inclusion. It is a 'seeing that' which is not identical with, but is bound up with, linguistic articulation (the sign here is not a linguistic sign, but an actual occurrence of, in this case, blue, known through perception). The apprehension of the sign blue as a sign of class-membership is already felt by many Buddhist thinkers to involve a degree of falsification, since Buddhist thought denied the fundamentally real status of universals which were held to be at variance with an appreciation of impermanence. To see *x* as a member of a class is to be one stage removed from an appreciation of *x*'s actual uniqueness, a true uniqueness which is usually held in Buddhism to be radically impermanent and the reification of which—partly the result of a projection of class-membership which is mutually implicated with linguistic articulation—leads to expectations (of endurance, satisfaction, etc.) which are bound eventually to be disappointed.

If a *saṃjñā* is a mental act involving class-inclusion the result of which is capable of being represented in linguistic form as, paradigmatically, a subject-predicate sentence, then the act of *saṃjñā* would appear to involve, and perhaps to correspond quite well with, what is usually thought of in philosophical circles as 'conceptualization'. The vagueness of the the word 'concept' in modern philosophical writing has become as notorious as the frequency of its use, a vagueness seen as a virtue by Peter Heath but bemoaned as the cause of a lamentable imprecision and rampant misunderstanding by C. W. K. Mundle.[11] According to Heath in general one is said to have the concept *x* if one knows the meaning of the word '*x*'; one can pick out or recognize a presented *x*, or think of *x*'s when they are not present, and/or if one knows the nature of *x*, that is, if one has grasped the properties of *x* which make *x*'s what they are (Heath, 1967, p. 177). The common denominator between all these conditions for having the concept is an ability to see *x* as a member of the class '*x*'s' It is commonly, although not exclusively, thought to involve linguistic competence. Thus, as Geach points out, 'if someone knows how to use the English word 'red', he has the concept of red'.[12] Paradigmatically, although not exclusively, we might say that someone has the concept of red if he or she can correctly attribute membership within the class of red things. In Buddhist terms here, one has the concept expressed by a term if one is capable of attributing the sign (i.e. the occurrence of red) which is referred to by that term to a subject which is characterized by that sign. For Buddhist writers all *saṃjñā* involves conceptualization and, it seems, all conceptualization involves *saṃjñā*. If *saṃjñā* is problematic for Buddhists then so, of course, is conceptualization. And although a Chinese Buddhist, Mahāyāna is following an old Indian Buddhist precedent when he sees enlightenment as being a mental state antitheti-

[9] Note that I am not concerned here with whether the monk Mahāyāna *really* held the 'blank mind' thesis. There is some evidence from relatively recently discovered Central Asian material that his position may have been rather more subtle than this. It may also bear some relationship to the Chinese Taoist notion of 'doing nothing' (*wu-wei*) which, if I understand it correctly, does not always entail literally doing nothing at all. But Kamalaśīla and most later Tibetan writers certainly thought Mahāyāna held the blank mind thesis. This thesis is criticized by Kamalaśīla in his three *Bhāvanākramas*, and there can be no reasonable doubt that it is there the monk Mahāyāna who is being criticized.

[10] See the discussion in Williams, 1980.

[11] See P. L. Heath, 1967; and C. W. K. Mundle, 1970, 1:8.

[12] Peter Geach, 1971 reprint, p. 12.

cal to *saṃjñā* and therefore the conceptualizing and linguistic process. In the *Kāśyaparivarta*, attributed to the Buddha himself, it is said that a monk who has destroyed conceptualization (*saṃjñā*) and dichotomizing discrimination (*vikalpa*) is liberated, he has nothing more to do.[13]

Mahāyāna and Kamalaśīla both appear to agree that enlightenment involves a mental state free of conceptualization and therefore for the person undergoing it ineffable, and apparently free of any other form of hypostatizing or discriminating mental act. Where they disagree is in terms of what this actually amounts to, particularly in terms of the process by which it is brought about. For Kamalaśīla a mental state free from conceptualization cannot be the result of simply ceasing to think, of making the mind a blank. There are paradoxes involved in any claim to have a completely empty mind, and the subsequent claim that the mental state was non-conceptual. For Kamalaśīla one could never bring about such a state. He comments that anyone who thinks that they will not think of anything is in fact doing a great deal of thinking (Houston, 1980, p. 19)! Of course, even supposing one could bring about such a state, if a mental state is genuinely empty of content then it is difficult to see how one could call this a mental state. There cannot be an *experience* lacking content, for there could be no way of distinguishing it from no experience at all. If one really had a blank mind, one could have no grounds for claiming that one's mind is or was a blank, or that it is or was in a non-conceptual state (assuming one intends to mean by 'blank mind' and 'non-conceptual state' more than the mental state of a stone, i.e. no mental state at all). One is tempted to assert that such an absence of experience could have no significance, religious or otherwise. But this would, I think be to overstate the case. It could have no significance for someone in that state, that is, *in itself* it is just a blank and therefore insignificant. But for one who is not enlightened it could be said to be significant as that towards which one strives, that is, the cessation of the forces which lead to unenlightenment, and indeed this is perfectly coherent, given the premises of the monk Mahāyāna. If all mental activity is the cause of unenlightenment, then a cessation of mental activity would be enlightenment.[14] Whether that could be worth striving after, a worthy goal of religious life, depends on one's estimation of unenlightenment and human potential. But clearly, as Kamalaśīla points out in his reply, it would not be the state of perfect wisdom and compassion, characterized by attributes such as remembering all one's infinite past lives, perfect altruism for the benefit of others and so on, which are said to accompany the attainment of the highest goal in Buddhism.

The fact that the significance of a blank mind could only be for those who had not yet attained it is important, for it is just the process of attainment that Kamalaśīla sees as providing the most powerful argument and coherent basis for his claim that a mere blank mind—a *tabula rasa*—is not what is meant by the non-conceptual state which is associated with enlightenment. His argument is in terms of how the non-conceptual state is brought about, but it is clear that it also involves what it is to be a non-conceptual state in the significant sense referred to in the context of generating enlightenment.

Kamalaśīla begins his attack on Mahāyāna by pointing out that simply making the mind a blank is the very antithesis to the wisdom which results from the correct analysis of things (*so sor rtog pa'i shes rab* = Skt.: *pratyavekṣaṇaprajñā*), which is to say, it is the very opposite of seeing things the way they really are. In other words, for Kamalaśīla critical analysis is not to be denied, but is the constituent, an essential constituent, in the way by which we come to understand things and thus eventually attain a mental state which while it is non-conceptual is clearly not a mere blank. Analytical wisdom is the very root of correct gnosis, Kamalaśīla comments. To abandon that is to abandon any supramundane gnosis. Without the wisdom of correct analysis how could a *yogin* in his meditation attain to the mental state which is not subject to dichotomizing discrimination?[15] A mere blank is not able to be a cause for bringing about a genuine state of non-conceptuality (Demiéville, 1952, p. 350). That is, knowing that something is the case, a 'knowing that' reached through critical analysis, is a prerequisite to subsequently attaining through meditation a mental state of direct acquaintance with the state of affairs which was previously known only through reasoning. Kamalaśīla may accept a mental state which is in some sense non-conceptual, but the process by which it is brought about implicitly involves the use of conceptual reasoning. Moreover although that eventual state may have some similarities to the blank mind referred to by Mahāyāna, in that they both purport to be

[13] See A. von Stael-Holstein, 1926, section 136.

[14] Actually, the matter is a bit more complicated than this, since in Buddhist thought mental acts associated with the forces which produce unenlightenment generate seeds which will normally contribute towards a perpetuation of the process of unenlightenment into further births. Thus cutting all mental processes might prevent *further* seeds of unenlightenment, but it would not in itself destroy those seeds which are already present 'in the mental continuum'. This also is behind Kamalaśīla's criticism that simply making the mind a blank would not have the force to generate liberation.

[15] I am basing my discussion here on the account of Kamalaśīla's position outlined in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, for which I have the Tibetan text reproduced by Houston. However, this account follows very closely that written by Kamalaśīla himself in his third *Bhāvanākrama*, translated by Etienne Lamotte in the Appendix to Demiéville, 1952.

153/3

non-conceptual, in actual fact there is a great deal of difference between them. For Kamalaśīla the process of attainment in some sense determines the eventual state. It may be non-conceptual but it is a non-conceptuality which contains, as it were, all that went before. It follows that for Kamalaśīla while the mental state itself may be non-conceptual in that a person enjoying such a state is not engaging in conceptualizing, it is possible for others, or the *yogin* after his gnosis, to adequately explain what the state was, and its content. For this state has some content, and is thus distinguishable from the blank state which in its very absence of content could not be said to be an experience at all. A distinction is to be drawn between a mental state which is non-conceptual and the contents of that state, that is, what the state is of, expressed in terms of who the subject of that state is and what it is directed towards, a direction determined by the analyses which had taken place previously. The monk Mahāyāna assumed that there is a paradox in using conceptual means to bring about a non-conceptual state. For Kamalaśīla this is an unwarranted assumption.

We cannot begin to appreciate the force of Kamalaśīla's counter-argument to the blank mind unless we appreciate what Kamalaśīla's Madhyamaka philosophy, and those Tibetans who came after him, mean when they refer to the 'ultimate'—that the knowledge of which forms the referential content of the ultimate gnosis. According to a widely accepted etymology of 'ultimate' (*paramārtha*) it is called 'ultimate' because it is the supreme (*parama*) referent (*artha*).[16] It is, our author says, the referent of supreme gnosis free from dichotomizing discrimination. Thus the mental state associated with direct non-conceptual gnosis seems to *have* a referent, even if there is no sense in the experience itself that 'This is the supreme referent.' It is perfectly possible for me, in seeing blue for example, to be so absorbed that I am not aware *that* I am seeing blue. Yet it does not thereby become false that I am seeing blue, that blue is the object of my experience.

This view appears to be at variance, however, with a verse much quoted in later Tibetan literature from the eighth century Mādhyamika Śāntideva: 'Reality' (by which he means the ultimate), Śāntideva says, 'is not a referent of the mind.'[17] This point was taken up in Tibet by one of the early translators, rNgog Lotsawa, and was particularly associated with the name of one of the greatest Tibetan scholars, Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (pronounced: Kern ga gyel tsen—1182–1251): 'Since the ultimate is free from *prapañcas*, it is not a referent of conventional usages like "existence", "nonexistence", "negation" and "proof". This is because it is not a mental referent.'[18] The word *prapañca* refers to yet another dimension of the process of conceptualization, discursivity and hypostatization, this time the whole process of conceptual proliferation involving or through linguistic reification.[19] The ultimate is beyond *prapañcas*, it is ineffable and the experience of it is non-conceptual because, Sa skya Paṇḍita is saying, it is not a mental referent at all. In saying that the experience of the ultimate is non-conceptual we are also saying not only that there is no conceptual activity taking place while a subject is undergoing the experience, but also it is *essentially* non-conceptual in that it lacks all objective content. It is not clear here whether Sa skya Paṇḍita also wants to hold that this experience lacks a subject, although given the normal correlation of subject-object dichotomy in Buddhist thought it is almost certain that he would want to maintain this. If so, then once more if it is taken literally it is difficult to see how this could be called an experience at all. If it is not possible *for anyone* to say that *x* is having the experience, or that it is an experience of *y*, then it is difficult to see what it means to speak of an experience here, and Sa skya Paṇḍita's position in fact collapses into that of the monk Mahāyāna.

The view that a gnosis directed towards the ultimate has no object and therefore lacks content was opposed in Tibet with considerable vigour and hermeneutical skill by some of the great scholars of the dGe lugs school (pronounced: Geluk), founded by rJe Tsong kha pa in the late fourteenth century. In his massive treatise on the ultimate, spoken of as emptiness, Tsong kha pa's pupil mKhas grub rje (pr.: Kay drup jay) writes that such an interpretation is obviously absurd, for it would follow that the Buddha himself taught the ultimate truth without knowing it—since there is nothing to know! Moreover since on this basis there *is* no ultimate truth, because if there were it could presumably be cognized as an object of the mind, so there ceases to be any distinction between the way things appear to be and the way they actually are.[20] In other words, if the ultimate is not a mental referent there cannot be an experience of the ultimate. From which it follows that for mKhas grub rje one can only meaningfully speak of an experience if it has a referential content. Thus it is quite clear that Śāntideva should not be taken to mean literally that the ultimate is not an object of the mind, that is, it cannot form the objective content (the 'intentional referent', in Brentano's sense) of a mental state of supreme gnosis which

[16] See Bhāvaviveka's *Tarkajvālā*, quoted in Tsong kha pa's *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, p. 31.

[17] *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 9:2, ed. P. L. Vaidya, 1960: *buddher agocaras tattvam*.

[18] From the *mKhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo*, Tibetan text quoted in Jackson, 1987, p. 396, note 95.

[19] See once more Williams, 1980.

[20] mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang, 1972, p. 430.

takes the ultimate as its referent. mKhas grub rje comments that 'as for the nature of the ultimate truth, the referent which is an actual mode of being that is not the referential sphere of a mind which is deluded by dualistic appearances is the ultimate'.[21] In other words it is possible to talk of a mental state as both non-conceptual and having a referential content. The claim that it has no referent at all should be taken as signifying that its referent is not apprehended in the way of ordinary dualistic experience. What mKhas grub rje does here is direct attention away from the primacy of the non-conceptual experience itself, a primacy which had been taken to suggest paradoxical philosophical, that is conceptual, conclusions. mKhas grub rje in fact draws a distinction between the experience, which may be non-conceptual in the sense that it does not involve any apparent conceptual activity while occurring, and may have been brought about precisely by discovering the range and limitations of conceptuality, and the structure of that experience revealed to others, or the same *yogin* in his post-meditational state. It is at least not obviously paradoxical to claim to have had an experience which has a subject-object structure even though at the time the experience was undergone no subject or object were consciously felt to be present. There is a distinction between an experience and that which is experienced. That the experience here is non-conceptual is vouchsafed by the nature of the experience itself and what led up to it. None of this suggests that it *cannot* be conceptualized. In all of this, I think, mKhas grub rje and the dGe lugs tradition are making good philosophical sense and going some way to avoiding the problems associated with non-conceptuality that bedevilled the monk Mahāyāna and even touched Sa skya Paṇḍita.

This may be an appropriate point to summarize what I think I am saying here in general about a non-conceptual experience of the ultimate (whatever that might be). I can make sense of an experience which when it is occurring does not appear to involve the conscious use of any conceptual categories. What I do not think this implies is a conclusion that the experience is non-conceptual*izable*. If this point requires that there must be some sort of subconscious conceptualization going on, then so be it. If to have a concept of x involves an ability to pick out or recognize a presented x then it seems to me that this can occur at a level subliminal to ordinary focused awareness. There can thus be different levels of conceptualization. To have the concept of x also includes an ability to use x-terms (if they are used at all) correctly. It does not require that x-terms are actually employed on every possible occasion. An experience which is non-conceptual in the sense that it could *never*

[21] Ibid. p. 431: *don dam bden pa'i ngo bo nil gnyis snang 'khrul pa'i blo yi spyod yul ma yin pa'i gnas lugs kyi don ni don dam pa yin la!*

be conceptualized even in subsequent cool reflection is simply meaningless. It could not be meaningfully described as an experience, or of the ultimate. To a claim to have had a non-conceptual experience of this type one can reply that it is a contradiction and anyway, so what? *This* experience (supposing one grants that it is an experience) could not be the experience claimed to have such significance in religious discourse. The monk Mahāyāna's blank mind can be made meaningful only because of his apparent contention that *all* mental activity is unenlightenment. The blank mind gains meaning structurally, as not-unenlightenment. But we have seen that the blank mind is nevertheless still incoherent as an explanation of the experience of Buddhist enlightenment.

I can also understand that someone may enjoy an experience for which no description or explanation is felt to be adequate. This very inadequacy requires that the original experience was in some sense conceptualized or is conceptualizable, otherwise one could not say that the description is inadequate. Likewise I can understand a claim that a particular person or group may lack conceptual dexterity, or a symbol system may be too impoverished to adequately symbolize the experience involved,[22] although this would seem to require a second symbol system in which it *could* be at least more adequately symbolized, for otherwise how again would we know that the first symbolization was inadequate?[23] But none of this warrants the claim that the experience is of such a type that it could never be conceptualized, in the sense in which I have spoken of conceptualization. It is the issue of the non-

[22] For an ingenious example, see here Henle, 1970. Henle's point is that we can construct a symbol system in which something which could be expressed perfectly adequately in our normal English symbol system could not be said in the new system without paradox. It thus becomes ineffable in symbol system (i). It would follow, of course, that the claim of ineffability is relative to a symbol system. It ceases to involve *inherent* ineffability, or non-conceptualizability.

[23] Of course, the notion of *adequacy* depends on context and purpose. Adequacy in describing an experience does not mean literally giving the hearer the experience through one's use of words. A lot of so-called 'mystical' writing on ineffability often involves no more than the claim that having the experience is better than, and contains features not contained in, simply hearing about the experience. If the claim that the experience is beyond concepts involves simply differentiating between speaking about the experience and actually having it, then this is non-controversial—but as mKhas grub rje realizes, this need not entail such radical and absurd epistemological conclusions as a claim that the ultimate cannot be an intentional referent, or indeed spoken about in a way which enables the discourse to be inserted into a spiritual-cum-philosophical system.

conceptualizability of the non-conceptual experience which is approached both here and elsewhere in the work of dGe lugs writers like mKhas grub rje, and their approach—which would see the non-conceptual experience as in fact having a structure and therefore capable of being conceptualized, while not wishing to detract from the perceived nature of the experience itself—seems to me to be a necessary move towards greater systematic coherence. It is worth noting, however, that the very dGe lugs need for systematic coherence on such issues was itself a source of criticism by Tibetan scholars of other schools. I would argue however that this need was not religiously irrelevant or arbitrary.

To exist (*yod pa*), in dGe lugs thought, is to be a referential cognitive object (*shes bya*).[24] These two expressions refer to the same class. Thus if something is or can be a referential cognitive object, it exists. It follows from this, given the dGe lugs position on the ultimate as a cognitive object, that the ultimate too exists. Tsong kha pa himself comments that if the ultimate does not exist it could never be cognized, and the holy path would be pointless. Which is to say that we could not both cognize it *and* say that it could not be an object of cognition.[25] Tsong kha pa does not intend this as a *proof* of the ultimate. He is speaking to co-religionists. What he wishes to show (against those like Sa skya Paṇḍita) is that the ultimate must *exist*, that is, it must be capable of standing as a cognitive referent, and its non-conceptual nature does not entail that it cannot be conceptualized as, here, 'existent'. Even with reference to the non-conceptual, some concepts are not anathema, but can be applied and applied correctly. Since it exists a cognition of the ultimate must take a referential object.

In a famous comment the Indian Madhyamaka writer Candrakīrti (seventh century) remarks that whether Buddhas occur or not, the true nature of things remains. It exists (*chos nyid ces bya ba ni yod do*). It is the essence (*rang bzhin*) of things such as the eye and so on, by which Candrakīrti means it is the essence of all things. It is their very own nature which is to be directly cognized (i.e. is a referent of a direct gnosis) by an awareness which is free from the obscurations of nescience (*ma rig pa'i rab rib dang bral ba'i shes pas rtogs par bya ba'i rang gi ngo bo'o*).[26] Thus the ultimate is the essence of things, their true nature, and it can be known as an intentional object in the mental state (which is therefore a mental *act*) of direct non-conceptual awareness. Tsong kha pa defines the ultimate truth as 'that which is found by a critical analytic inferential awareness which sees an intentional referent that is actually the case' (*yang dag pa'i don mthong ba'i rigs shes kyis rnyed pa don dam bden pa'i mtshan nyid du gsungs pa'i phyir ro*).[27] If we take this comment together with that of Candrakīrti, we can see that the very same ultimate can be known—albeit in different ways—directly through acquaintance in the non-conceptual gnosis, and through knowing that it is the case through analytic reasoning which must necessarily be conceptual. From which it follows, of course, that whatever is known in the non-conceptual gnosis cannot be at variance with what is known in analytic reasoning. The gnosis for Tsong kha pa must therefore have a content, it must be conceptualizable.

Candrakīrti referred to the 'essence of things such as the eye and so on'. By 'essence' he clearly means here their ultimate nature. And that ultimate nature is, for Madhyamaka writers like Candrakīrti, Tsong kha pa and mKhas grub rje (and Kamalaśīla too, although according to Tibetan doxographers he follows a different sub-school of Madhyamaka) in the words of mKhas grub rje 'their not-being-established ultimately'. He comments, using a pot as his example: 'One should know the following: The ultimate of the pot, the essence of the pot, and the final mode of being of the pot, is the not-being-established-ultimately of the pot.'[28] This is also called their 'emptiness' (Skt.: *śūnyatā*/Tib.: *stong pa nyid*). Thus the ultimate which we have been talking about is for these Buddhist thinkers a negation, not in the sense of a positive approached through a *via negativa*, but a simple negation. It is the very absence of ultimate existence, and it is taken to apply to all things including itself. For all x, if x exists (that is, can be a referential cognitive object), x is empty of ultimate existence.

Space prevents me from giving an extensive explanation of what is going on here. I have said more about it elsewhere.[29] The Madhyamaka offers a sustained critique of what Nicholas Rescher has called 'our "standard view" of natural reality, as a congeries of physical particulars emplaced in space and time and interacting causally'.[30] The perspective of Madhyamaka is that the world cannot be made up of inherently

[24] See Hopkins, 1983, pp. 214–5.

[25] Tsong kha pa's commentary to the *Madhyamakāvatāra*, the *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*, p. 424: *don dam pa'i bden pa med na ni de rtogs pa mthar thug pa 'gro ba med la de med na lam sgom pa don med par 'gyur te!*. For more on this and related themes see Williams, 1982.

[26] See Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* on 6: 181–2. I have used the Cone edition, mDo xxiii, ff. 217–350.

[27] From Tsong kha pa's commentary to the *Madhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna: *dBu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa Shes rab ces bya ba'i rnam bshad Rigs pa'i rgya mtsho*, f. 237a.

[28] mKhas grub rje, 1972, p. 98: *bum pa don dam par ma grub pa de/bum pa'i don dam dang/bum pa'i rang bzhin dang bum pa'i gnas lugs yin no zhes shes par bya'o!*.

[29] See in particular Williams, 1989, pp. 60–72; and also Williams, 1982.

[30] See Rescher, 1973, p. 8.

independent particulars, and any claim to establish such a view of the world and events within it runs into paradoxes when subjected to critical examination. If we subject, say, a pot understood as an independent object out there in an independent external world to close critical investigation, we will find that such a pot cannot be. In Madhyamaka parlance, it is not found, lost, when subject to analytic investigation. And, as the eleventh-century Mādhyamika and important missionary to Tibet Atiśa puts it: 'If one examines with critical analysis this conventional (world) as it appears, nothing is found. The non-findingness is the ultimate; it is the primeval true nature of things.'[31] The ultimate is what is ultimately true about *all* things without exception, that they lack independent ultimacy. Although Nicholas Rescher's 'conceptual idealism' diverges at some, no doubt fundamental, points from the perspective of Madhyamaka, Candrakīrti, Tsong kha pa, Atiśa and others would have been happy with Rescher's observation that:

> Reality—our reality', as we can and do view it—is a 'mental construct' built up in the transaction of experiential encounter of person and environment by means of a conceptual framework that invariably and inevitably makes essential use of organizing principles. (1973, p. 4)

Madhyamaka writers do not see this as denying the existence of the world, but rather pointing out its actual status as dependently originated and lacking in the projections of immutability and mind-independence which we vest it with. *The* world is the only world; there is no Absolute at all—or rather the only Absolutes are the objects of projections of absolute nature which we mistakenly engage in *as if* they were really independent and self-subsisting entities. These projected Absolutes correspond to absolutely nothing.

Thus the ultimate in the Madhyamaka thought of dGe lugs writers like Tsong kha pa (or ultimates, for Madhyamaka frequently speaks of them in plural terms) is adequately represented in propositional form as the fact that *x* lacks ultimate—that is, inherent, mind independent—existence. Knowing it is a knowing *that*, and although it can be discovered through faith or scriptural utterance, i.e. the testimony of a reliable witness, this is not thought to be philosophically or in the last analysis religiously significant. It can and should be known through inference, critical thought, analysing the object of analysis to see if it does indeed have independent inherent existence. If this investigation

[31] *Satyadvayāvatāra* verse 21, in Lindtner, 1981: *kun rdzob ji ltar snang ba 'di rigs pas brtags na 'ga' mi rnyed/ma rnyed pa nyid don dam yin/ye nas gnas pa'i chos nyid do/.*

is not carried out *by someone* then the ultimate—absence of inherent existence (*niḥsvabhāvatā*)—could not be known. If it is not carried out *by oneself*, then a knowledge based only on belief or hearsay would not have the force to uproot our habitual patterns of perception which vest things with inherent existence and therefore lead to corresponding patterns of egoistic grasping behaviour which fuel the process of unenlightenment.[32]

It should be clear therefore why Kamalaśīla felt the position of the monk Mahāyāna to be so mistaken, and accused it of being the very antithesis of a wisdom which results from a correct analysis of the way things are. It seemed obvious to Kamalaśīla that making the mind a blank could not lead to an appreciation of the ultimate, for the ultimate is something about things, and can only be discovered through investigating things themselves. mKhas grub rje comments that those who wish to attain enlightenment need first to determine what reality is like, i.e. how things really are. If they do not, but simply strive to enter a state of non-conceptual absorption, then this is of no final soteriological significance—it is not really even Buddhist (1972, p. 6). The root delusion which generates unenlightenment is self-grasping (*bdag 'dzin*). Therefore only by actively uprooting this grasping through

[32] In a letter to me after the original delivery of this paper Michael McGhee has raised the interesting objection here that it would be incorrect for the Buddhist to hold that we *believe* things to have inherent existence just because we do not realize that they are dependent on conditions and therefore impermanent, etc.: 'We may not have any thoughts on the matter. The fact that I do not realize that lightning is an electrical discharge does not entail that I believe that it's *not*.' This is a complex issue for the Mādhyamika Buddhist, who certainly does maintain, with McGhee, that it would be wrong to say in any *simple* way that 'the man in the street' should be taken to hold the truth of propositions which he has never entertained or articulated. In general I think the Mādhyamika might reply that it all depends what we mean by 'believe'. It is arguable that there are all kinds of things which I could be said to believe although I do not have any thoughts on the matter, evinced in my behaviour such that, if it were said that my behaviour entails an acceptance of the truth of proposition *x*, I would assent to the truth of proposition *x* or change my behaviour in a way that does not require such assent. For example, the Mādhyamika would urge that there is a sense in which we can be said to believe that things are not mind-dependent not because we have thoughts about the subject, but because an assent to the truth of the proposition 'Things are not mind-dependent' is implicit in our behaviour towards things. It forms part of a framework for a system of beliefs and perceptions which the Buddhist holds is radically skewed because the framework itself is skewed. We are touching here on the Madhyamaka treatment of *latent, innate* tendencies to misperception implicit in what it is to be unenlightened. Needless to say, it is far too large a topic for a footnote!

understanding emptiness of inherent existence could one be liberated (ibid. p. 7).

Knowing the ultimate is a knowing that, and is therefore, of course, through and through conceptual. Without concepts there could be no knowing the ultimate. Yet there are different levels of conceptual usage. dGe lugs writers do not see a genuine uprooting of the habitual patterns of infinite lifetimes springing solely from an intellectual conviction, even if that conviction were rooted in inferential discovery. Repeated analysis, repeatedly discovering the same fact, strengthens the conviction, but cannot uproot deep habitual patterns. If I find again and again that my reasoning shows Archibald to be a thief, I become more and more certain that this is indeed the case, and I start to behave in a different way towards Archibald. But if I see him actually stealing the suet pudding, does a *qualitative* change in my attitude to Archibald take place? Perhaps all lingering remnants of respect are lost. In the case of emptiness, while there is a knowing that, there is also said to be a mental state of unwavering direct acquaintance with the very emptiness itself, the very absence which is an absence of inherent existence. I confess this sounds a bit peculiar but, providing we are clear this experience is not to be identified with a mere blank mind, I am not sure we are in any position to deny its possibility, or the dramatic results expressed in terms of the Madhyamaka system which are said to follow from it. Sartre, of course, speaks of seeing the absence of the expected Pierre in the cafe as a direct seeing of a positive absence.[33] In dGe lugs thought too a non-entity, an absence, which includes an emptiness, is nevertheless an existent, since it can form the referential object of a cognitive act. We can perhaps make some sense of a *yogin* having the ability to focus unwaveringly on the very absence itself, and we can perhaps grant also that if he could do this perfectly, then since the object would be an absence alone he would be in a mental state lacking all other objective content. And I think we have no grounds for *denying* that this could begin to uproot even the habits of infinite lifetimes. Having said that, I confess a certain unease here. On dGe lugs terms this non-conceptual mental state has a subject—the *yogin*'s mind—and an object, emptiness. But emptiness is a mere negation. Can there be a mental state with *only* a negation as its object? How could one in experience distinguish this from no experience at all? Does it not in the end fall prone to the very criticisms we made of the monk Mahāyāna's blank mind? As we shall see, other schools than the dGe lugs aimed their criticisms precisely at what they saw as the inadequacy of this notion of emptiness to support the Buddhist path to final liberation. The liberating gnosis, they argued, must have a more positive content.

[33] See his discussion in Sartre, 1966, pp. 10ff.

Anyway, one thing should be quite clear at this point. Cognizing emptiness, the ultimate, and uprooting these habitual mental tendencies, is for any school only half of what is thought of as enlightenment in Madhyamaka. To have an absorption directed towards emptiness is only valuable precisely *because* it uproots egoistic grasping. In itself it is incomplete. The meditator does not remain in a state of emptiness-absorption, but integrates that awareness into everyday life so that he or she can operate in the world for the benefit of others, with no egoistic concern, but complete altruism.

Thus the goal here is not simply to cognize the ultimate. Indeed, even this knowledge of emptiness through acquaintance has stages to it, for dGe lugs texts speak of the absorption occurring through the medium of concepts, and then eventually in a direct non-conceptual absorption which nevertheless is the result of all that has gone before, and is in content terms in no sense at variance with it.[34] As non-conceptual this absorption involves no language, no (conscious) placing within classes. It is therefore seeing the very absence, emptiness, completely uniquely, in an experience which is held to be like water entering water. There is said to be no sense that 'Ah, this is emptiness!' How, therefore, can we know that it *is* an experience of emptiness, the same as was previously experienced conceptually. The answer, I think, has to come at least in part from the conceptual framework within which the meditation is occurring, the stages which led up to it, which entail that subsequently the content of the non-conceptual experience can be uncovered. From this it would follow that there could be no grounds for claiming that two non-conceptual experiences occurring within different theoretical and practical systems are of the same thing, for the processes which led to the experiences determine what they are of. Thus Kamalaśīla was surely right not only in condemning the monk Mahāyāna's blank mind for denying the processes which lead to the non-conceptual experience of emptiness, but also in implying that the non-conceptual experience referred to by the monk Mahāyāna could not be the genuine liberating non-conceptual experience of Madhyamaka.

The dGe lugs perspective on these matters was not the only one in Tibet. Traditionally and to the present day there is said to be three other schools of Tibetan Buddhism: rNying ma (pr.: Nying mà), bKa' brgyud (Ka gyer), and Sa skya (Sa kya), of which Sa skya Paṇḍita was a

[34] The highly sophisticated epistemological theories and techniques which dGe lugs writers brought into play in order to explain how a conceptual process can lead to a direct non-conceptual awareness could form the subject of a further very long paper! For some materials in English see Klein, 1986, especially ch. 9, and Lati Rinbochay, 1980.

particularly renowned exponent. The sixteenth century bKa' brgyud writer Dvags po bKra shis rnam rgyal (Dakpo Trashi Namgyel) refers to the mere absence which is discovered through Madhyamaka analysis as tantamount to nihilism, and implies that this is not the emptiness which his school takes as the true ultimate.[35] The controversial Sa skya scholar Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) appears to have maintained that the ultimate associated with Madhyamaka analysis is a destructive ultimate (*chad stong*), a mere negation (*med 'dgag*), which is a form of negation which does not imply any contrasting reality. He seems to have held that this teaching is valuable for realizing what does not exist, clearing the field, as it were, but at the time of meditative absorption aimed at the ultimate one has to leave behind such analyses, and such a perspective.[36] The 'mere negation' (*med dgag*/Skt.: *prasajyapratiṣedha*), which is a straight negative carrying with it in context no implication of a positive, is often contrasted in Indo-Tibetan thought with an implicative negation (*ma yin dgag*/Skt.: *paryudāsapratiṣedha*), which does eventually imply a positive in place of what is negated.[37] Thus in criticizing the Madhyamaka perspective of the dGe lugs, Shākya mchog ldan and others are saying that its ultimate is nothing more than a nothing. The dGe lugs would of course accept this. It is not just any old nothing, though. Rather it is the very absence of inherent existence—that, the false projection of which, has kept us in unenlightenment. For Shākya mchog ldan this mere absence is a deficiency—in reality there is a positive ultimate which is beyond all conceptual determinations and beyond the ultimate referred to in the dGe lugs, which is merely the ultimate truth about the phenomenal world. Correspondingly, the emptiness which is pure negation and is known through critical analytic reasoning is thereby just a conceptual emptiness. The true, highest, ultimate is known not through analysis (which would necessarily be conceptual), but placing the mind simply, unwaveringly, in non-conceptual absorption. This, to the dGe lugs, is simply the position of our old friend, the monk Mahāyāna.

[35] See Namgyal, 1986, p. 78. He takes his support here from a verse in the *Kālacakra Tantra*, attributed to the Buddha himself. Unfortunately I do not possess a copy of the Tibetan text used for this translation. I have my doubts about its complete reliability however, at least as regards the straight translation of Madhyamaka material. Compare bKra shis rnam rgyal's comments on the dGe lugs (Madhyamaka) emptiness not being the real ultimate with his contemporary the Eighth Karma pa, Mi bskyod rdo rje's (1507–54) attack on dGe lugs Madhyamaka in Williams, 1983, especially pp. 134 ff.

[36] See the highly critical account in the *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long*, by the dGe lugs scholar Thu'u bkvan bla ma bLo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802), Beijing edition, 1989, p. 231. This has been translated in Ruegg, 1963.

[37] For the dGe lugs view of these negations, see Klein, 1986, chs. 6, 7.

Thus the dGe lugs are accused by its opponents of remaining in conceptualization. The dGe lugs accuses its opponents of denying the primacy of analysis and thereby in fact if not intention teaching no insight at all, but only a tranquil, stupified mind which is not truly Buddhist. Even as early as Rong zom Paṇḍita Chos kyi bzang po (pr.: Cher kyi zang po), a rNying ma writer of the late eleventh century, we find him answering the accusation that his teachings are opposed to logic and should not be accepted, with the reply that reasoning and logic apply mainly to conceptual thought, to sensory objects concerned with *saṃjñā* (*'du shes*). They do not apply to the 'essence' (*ngo bo nyid*), which is the object of a mind particularized by stainless wisdom.[38] This view is common in the rNying ma tradition of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*), where it is taught that those of sharp intellect do not need to engage in analytic investigation at all. Indeed, they do not even need to meditate, for even meditation involves conceptual awareness.[39] I have argued that such a perspective entails a difference with the dGe lugs in what the ultimate is, and this appears to be accepted by writers like Shākya mchog ldan. One corollary of this, however, is that there appears to be a case against the common view stated nowadays among Tibetans that all the four systems are aiming at the same goal. I have also argued in defence of the dGe lugs that there is no immediate contradiction between claiming that the ultimate can be conceptualized, and it is known in an experience which does not appear to the one undergoing it to be conceptual.[40] The fact that emptiness is a

[38] *ngo bo nyid kyi mtshan nyid ni shes rab dri ma myed pas bye brag tu byas pa'i blo'i spyod yul lol*. Text in Karmay, 1988, pp. 128–9.

[39] See the translations from the work of the greatest rNying ma scholar, kLong chen rab 'byams pa (Long chen rap jam pa: 1308–63), in Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, 1989, pp. 282–4. See also kLong chen pa's comments on the delusions of logicians, pp. 267–9.

[40] Of course, I have suggested that there may be 'subconscious concepts' involved. I am sure that Shākya mchog ldan would see this as a point to attack the dGe lugs. But the non-conceptual experience of the ultimate must be conceptualizable. This would only be a criticism if one could coherently argue that 'non-conceptual' here entails non-conceptualizable. But I think it cannot, and the systems of the schools show it cannot. Actually, the presence of subconscious concepts engaged in making sense even of the non-conceptual experience of emptiness may be one way for the dGe lugs to answer the problem of how to distinguish an experience which takes a mere negation alone as an object from no experience at all. There could, for example, be some sort of 'subconscious conceptual traces' still operative present from the previous analyses which led up to the non-conceptual experience. An alternative (or maybe complementary) approach would be to argue that what the dGe lugs tradition is actually trying to do is describe an experience which is in fact an experience of pure, radiant consciousness which is *as if* it had no intentional

non-entity does not for the dGe lugs mean that it cannot be experienced in a non-conceptual experience, nor does it mean *as such* that this experience could not liberate from unenlightenment. Moreover the non-conceptual ultimate of Shākya mchog ldan *et al.* would also seem to be open to criticisms of conceptualization as soon as it is mentioned, and it would be exposed to a dGe lugs Madhyamaka critique directed at all real, positive Absolute Realities. It is not enough to reply simply that, well, the attack would work were our Absolute conceptualizable, although it is not. That would be to try and have the suet pudding and eat it! I have suggested also that if knowing the ultimate in a non-conceptual experience involves non-conceptual*izability* then this is either incoherent or useless for Buddhism. And I have expressed some reservations about whether the dGe lugs perspective is nevertheless in

1591 3

the last analysis coherent in maintaining that there can be a non-conceptual experience which takes a mere absence alone as its object. There are still questions in my mind about whether it makes sense to talk of an *experience* of this type.

One feels this controversy between the schools could run and run. It did, and I have! I shall stop here.

referent, although we know from the previous analyses that it has a referent—without the referent it would not be the pure, radiant consciousness we are talking about—and this referent is in fact the same emptiness discovered conceptually through analysis. This experience has been brought about through Madhyamaka analysis, as its culmination. Writers like Shākya mchog ldan, it would then be argued, are simply wrong in thinking that realizing a pure, radiant consciousness requires abandoning analysis, or seeing its limitations, postulating a real, inherently existing positive Absolute Reality in some sense identified with that radiant consciousness. I do not think this approach would be radically at variance with the dGe lugs tradition. Having said that, I am still not sure that I can make any sense of a mental state which is said to be pure consciousness without an object—or rather, with an object which is a mere absence. I can accept that it contains within it all that has gone before, and this distinguishes it from a blank mind. But I still cannot see that this pure consciousness with a negative object can be experientially distinguished from unconsciousness. In other words, I am not clear that we could speak of such a mental state of pure consiousness as an *experience*. I am doubtful that it makes sense to talk of contentless consciousness, and saying that it has content in the form of an intentional referent which is a mere absence alone does not seem to me to solve the difficulties. Something more is going to have to be said to make it an experience, it must have greater (conceptual) content. This something more may be related in some way to previous aets of analysis, i.e. what has gone before. Can the notion of 'subconscious conceptual traces' help? It depends on what they are supposed to be. But it might be suggested that what I am doing here is anyway pointless, since I am speculating about a paranormal experience which I confess I have not had. It should be clear however that what I am worried about is not the attempt to describe that which is held to be ineffable but whether, given what the experience is said to be, it makes any sense at all. In other words, the conceptual issue of whether there can be an experience *of that type*. For more on the perspective of Shākya mchog ldan (although not his own particular views) and the similar Jo nang tradition in Tibet, and also its origins within Mahāyāna Buddhism, see Williams, 1989, ch. 5. For a sympathetic account of this perspective see Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, 1986.

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'Know Thyself': What Kind of an Injunction?

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To be told, 'know thyself' is to be told that I don't know myself *yet*: it carries the assumption that I am in some sense distracted from what or who I actually am, that I am in error or at least ignorance about myself. It thus further suggests that my habitual stresses, confusions and frustrations are substantially the result of failure or inability to see what is most profoundly true of me: the complex character of my injuries or traumas, the distinctive potential given me by my history and temperament. I conceal my true feelings from my knowing self; I am content to accept the ways in which other people define me, and so fail to 'take my own authority' and decide for myself who or what I shall be. The therapy-orientated culture of the North Atlantic world in the past couple of decades has increasingly taken this picture as foundational, looking to 'self-discovery' or 'self-realization' as the precondition of moral and mental welfare. And the sense of individual alienation from a true and authoritative selfhood mirrors the political struggle for the right of hitherto disadvantaged groups, especially non-white and non-male, to establish their own self-definition. The rhetoric of discovering a true but buried identity spreads over both private and political spheres. The slogan of the earliest generation of articulate feminists, 'The personal is the political', expresses the recognition of how this connection might be made.

R. D. Laing's seminal work of 1960, *The Divided Self*, did much to popularize the idea of a distinction between different 'self-systems', with the essential feature of schizoid disorder being defined as the separation of a 'real', 'inner' self, invisible to the observer, from the behaviour of the empirical ('false') self. For Laing, the clinical schizophrenic's condition is an extreme case of the schizoid fantasies common in supposedly sane persons, whose behaviour and language betray a belief that they have an untouched core of selfhood which must not be compromised or limited by involved action, but which lives in a state of fictitious freedom and omnipotence—described by Laing (pp. 87–8) as the direct opposite of Hegel's insistence in the *Phenomenology* that performance alone measures what is real in the life of an agent. Laing, in fact, is diagnosing the language of a 'real', non-appearing self as a sign of dysfunction; but already in *The Divided Self* and more dramatically

161/3

(11)

Dhammasaṅgaṇī
Dhammasaṅgaṇī Aṭṭhakathā (Aṭṭhasālinī)
Majjhima Nikāya
Mahā Niddesa
Paṭisambhidāmagga
Puggalapaññatti
Saṁyutta Nikāya
Sutta Nipāta
Vinaya Piṭaka
Visuddhimagga

ices to Vism. are followed by the section and page number
ıu Ñāṇamoli's translation, *The Path of Purification* (see
ed). Otherwise, all references are to the Pali Text
litions.

Written by
Bhikkhu ~~Ñāṇa~~ Bodhi
His introduction to his
translation to the
MAHĀNIDĀNA SUTTA

Pali shows the emphasis of PS in that according to SN 11.10, the Buddha was still a Bodhisatta when he discovered

Dependent Arising

In the Theravada Buddhist tradition the Mahānidāna Sutta is regarded as one of the profoundest discourses spoken by the Buddha. Its principal theme is *paṭiccasamuppāda*, "dependent arising," and that immediately alerts us to its importance. For the Pali Canon makes it quite plain that dependent arising is not merely one strand of doctrine among others, but the radical insight at the heart of the Buddha's teaching from which everything else unfolds. For the Buddha himself, during his period of struggle for enlightenment, dependent arising came as the astonishing, eye-opening discovery that ended his groping in the dark: "'Arising, arising'—thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and light" (S. XII. 65/ii.105). A series of suttas shows the same discovery to be the essence of each Buddha's attainment of enlightenment (S. XIII. 4-10). Once enlightened, the mission of a Tathāgata, a Perfect One, is to proclaim dependent arising to the world (S.XII.20/ii.25-6). So often does the Buddha do this, in discourse after discourse, that dependent arising soon becomes regarded as the quintessence of his teaching. When the arahat Assaji was asked to state the Master's message as concisely as possible, he said it was the doctrine that phenomena arise and cease through causes (Vin. i. 40). With a single sentence the Buddha dispels all doubt about the correctness of this summary: "He who sees dependent arising sees the Dhamma, he who sees the Dhamma sees dependent arising" (M.28/i. 191).

The reason dependent arising is assigned so much weight lies in two essential contributions it makes to the teaching. First it provides the teaching with its primary ontological principle, its key for understanding the nature of being. Second, it provides the framework that guides its programme for deliverance, a causal account of the origination and cessation of suffering. These two contributions, though separable in thought, come together in the

thesis that makes the Buddha's teaching a "doctrine of awakening": that suffering ultimately arises due to ignorance about the nature of being and ceases through wisdom, direct understanding of the nature of being.

The ontological principle contributed by dependent arising is, as its name suggests, the arising of phenomena in dependence on conditions. At a stroke this principle disposes of the notion of static self-contained entities and shows that the "texture" of being is through and through relational. Whatever comes into being originates through conditions, stands with the support of conditions, and ceases when its conditions cease. But dependent arising teaches something more rigorous than a simple assertion of general conditionality. What it teaches is *specific conditionality* (*idappaccayatā*), the arising of phenomena in dependence on specific conditions. This is an important point often overlooked in standard accounts of the doctrine. Specific conditionality correlates phenomena in so far as they belong to *types*. It holds that phenomena of a given type originate only through the conditions appropriate to that type, never in the absence of those conditions, never through the conditions appropriate to some other type. Thus dependent arising, as a teaching of specific conditionality, deals primarily with structures. It treats phenomena, not in terms of their isolated connections, but in terms of their patterns—recurrent patterns that exhibit the invariableness of law:

> "Bhikkhus, what is dependent arising? 'With birth as condition aging and death come to be'—whether Tathāgatas arise or not, that element stands, that structuredness of phenomena, that fixed determination of phenomena, specific conditionality. That a Tathāgata awakens to and comprehends. Having awakened to it and comprehended it, he explains it, teaches it, proclaims it, establishes it, reveals it, analyzes it, and clarifies it, saying: 'See, bhikkhus, with birth as condition aging and death come to be'. The reality in that, the undelusiveness, invariability, specific conditionality—this, bhikkhus, is called dependent arising" (S. XII.20/II.25-6).

The basic formula for dependent arising appears in the suttas countless times: "When there is this that comes to be; with the arising of this that arises. When this is absent that does not come to be; with the cessation of this that ceases."[1] This gives the principle in the abstract, stripped of any reference to a content. But the Buddha is not interested in abstract formulas devoid of content; for him content is all-important. His teaching is concerned with a problem—the problem of suffering (*dukkha*)—and with the task of bringing suffering to an end. Dependent arising is introduced because it is relevant to these concerns, indeed not merely relevant but indispensable. It gives the framework needed to understand the problem and also indicates the approach that must be taken if it is to be resolved.

The suffering with which the Buddha's teaching is concerned has a far deeper meaning than personal unhappiness, discontent, or psychological stress. It includes these, but it goes beyond. The problem in its fullest measure is existential suffering, the suffering of bondage to the round of repeated birth and death. The round, the Buddha teaches, has been turning without beginning, and as long as it turns it inevitably brings "aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair." To gain deliverance from suffering, therefore, requires more than relief from its transient individual manifestations. It requires total liberation from the round.

In order to end the round, the conditions that sustain it have to be eliminated; and to eliminate them it is necessary to know what they are, how they hold together, and what must be done to extinguish their causal force. Though the round has no first point, no cause outside itself, it does have a distinct generative structure, a set of conditions internal to itself which keeps it going. The teaching of dependent arising discloses this set of conditions. It lays them out in an interlocking sequence which makes it clear how existence repeatedly renews itself from within, and how it will continue into the future through the continued activation of these causes. Most importantly, however, dependent arising shows that the round can be stopped. It traces the sequence to its most fundamental factors. Then it points out that these can be eliminated and that with their elimination the round of rebirths and its attendant suffering are brought to a halt.

1 Imasmiṁ sati idaṁ hoti; imass 'uppādā idaṁ uppajjati. Imasmiṁ asati idam na hoti; imassa nirodhā idaṁ nirujjhati. (e.g. S.XII, 21./ii.28).

As an account of the causal structure of the round, dependent arising appears in the suttas in diverse formulations. The fullest and most common contains twelve factors. The formula has two sides. One shows the sequence of origination, the other the sequence of cessation:

> Bhikkhus, what is dependent arising? With ignorance as condition volitional formations come to be; with volitional formations as condition consciousness; with consciousness as condition mentality-materiality; with mentality-materiality as condition the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as condition contact; with contact as condition feeling; with feeling as condition craving; with craving as condition clinging; with clinging as condition existence; with existence as condition birth; with birth as condition aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair come to be. Such is the origin of this entire mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is called dependent arising.
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> But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance volitional formations cease; with the cessation of volitional formations consciousness ceases; with the cessation of consciousness mentality-materiality ceases; with the cessation of mentality-materiality the six sense bases cease; with the cessation of the six sense bases contact ceases; with the cessation of contact feeling ceases; with the cessation of feeling craving ceases; with the cessation of craving clinging ceases; with the cessation of clinging existence ceases; with the cessation of existence birth ceases; with the cessation of birth aging and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering. (S. XII. 1/ii. 1-2)[1].

The prevailing interpretation regards the series as spanning three successive lives, the twelve factors representing the causal and resultant phases of these lives alternated to show the round's inherent capacity for self-regeneration. Thus ignorance and volitional formations represent the causal phase of the previous life which brought about existence in the present; the five factors from consciousness through feeling are their fruit, the resultant phase of the present life. Craving, clinging, and existence represent renewed causal activity in the present life; birth and aging and death sum up the resultant phase of the future life.

At the risk of oversimplification the sequence can be briefly explained as follows. Due to ignorance—formally defined as non-knowledge of the four noble truths—a person engages in motivated action, which may be wholesome or unwholesome, bodily, verbal, or mental. These actions, referred to here as volitional formations, constitute kamma. At the time of rebirth kamma conditions the re-arising of consciousness, which comes into being bringing along its psychophysical adjuncts, "mentality-materiality." In dependence on the psychophysical adjuncts, the six sense bases develop—the five outer senses and the mind-base. Through these contact takes place between consciousness and its objects, and contact in turn conditions feeling. In response to feeling craving springs up, and if it grows firm, leads into clinging. Driven by clinging actions are performed tending to new existence. These actions, kamma backed by craving, eventually bring a new existence: birth followed by aging and death.

To prevent misunderstanding it has to be stressed that the distribution of the factors into three lives is an expository device employed for the purpose of exhibiting the inner dynamics of the round. It should not be read as implying hard and fast divisions, for in lived experience the factors are always intertwined. The past causes include craving, clinging and existence, the present ones ignorance and volitional formations; the present resultants begin with birth and end in death, and future birth and death will fall upon the same resultants. Moreover, the present resultant and causal phases should not be seen as temporally segregated from each other, as if assigned to different periods of life. Rather, through the entire course of life, they succeed one another with incredible rapidity in an alternating sequence of result and response. A past kamma ripens in present results; these trigger off new action; the action is followed by more results; and these are again followed by still more action. So it has gone on through time without beginning, and so it continues.

1 It will be noted that, as the twelvefold formula accounts for the origin and cessation of suffering, it offers an expanded version of the second and third noble truths. In fact, in one sutta (A.iii.61/i.177) the two sides of the formula are stated in full as explanations of these two truths.

From this it is clear that dependent arising does not describe a set of causes somehow underlying experience, mysteriously hidden out of view. What it describes is the fundamental pattern of experience as such, when enveloped by ignorance as to the basic truths about itself. This pattern is always present, always potentially accessible to our awareness. Only, without the guidance of the Buddha's teaching, it will not be properly attended to, and thence will not be seen for what it is. It takes a Buddha to point out the startling truth that the basic pattern of experience is itself the source of our bondage, "the origin of this entire mass of suffering."

Cast and Setting

Among the many suttas on dependent arising spoken by the Buddha, the Mahānidāna Sutta is the longest and most detailed; it is also perhaps the richest as a source of insights. Despite its length, however, the Mahānidāna Sutta does not give the most complete formal exposition of dependent arising. It lacks the abstract formula and a statement of the sequence of cessation. Moreover, its series of conditions omits three factors of the standard version: ignorance, volitional formations, and the six sense bases. These omissions have led some scholars to suggest that the twelvefold formulation may be a later augmentation of a shorter original; but such suggestions remain purely conjectural, misleading, and objectionable on doctrinal and textual grounds. All in all, omissions of the Mahānidāna Sutta are more than compensated for by its detailed explanations, interesting digressions, and supplementary sections. Indeed, it might well be suspected, contrary to the thesis of historical development, that in the present sutta the Buddha has varied the usual exposition expressly to create an opportunity for such special methods of treatment.[1]

The sutta begins when the venerable Ānanda, the Buddha's personal attendant, approaches the Master and exclaims that though dependent arising is deep and appears deep, to himself it seems "as clear as clear can be" (*uttānakuttānaka*). The Pali word *uttāna*, "clear," also means "shallow," and is sometimes contrasted with "deep" (*gambhīra*), as in the example given in the commentary. Thus Ānanda's words, though doubtlessly innocent and respectful in intent, confront the Buddha with a challenge. They call upon him to reconfirm the profundity of his teaching by demonstrating the depth of its most distinctive doctrine.

The Buddha first checks the venerable Ānanda with the gentle admonition: "Do not say so, Ānanda! Do not say so, Ānanda!" These words, according to the commentary, intimate both praise and reproach. They praise Ānanda by implying his special qualities which enabled him to comprehend dependent arising so clearly: his accumulation of merit over many lives, his previous study, his attainment of stream-entry, his vast erudition. They reproach him by hinting at the limitations of his understanding: he could never have penetrated conditionality without the guidance of the Buddha; he still remains a stream-enterer barely past the entrance to the path; even when he reaches the final stage of arahatship he will not attain the knowledge of a chief disciple, paccekabuddha, or fully enlightened Buddha. In the sutta itself, after restraining the venerable Ānanda, the Buddha corrects him by repeating his original statement on the profundity of dependent arising: "This dependent arising, Ānanda, is deep and it appears deep." The phrase about the deep appearance, the subcommentary says, is added to stress the fact that dependent arising is exclusively deep. We might perhaps understand the first phrase to refer to dependent arising as an objective principle, the second to refer to the verbal exposition of that principle. Together they indicate that dependent arising is deep both in essence and in manifestation.

The commentary takes up the Buddha's statement and amplifies it by explaining four respects in which dependent arising can be called deep: because of its depth of meaning, depth of phenomena, depth of teaching, and of penetration. As this fourfold analysis is found in several places in the commentaries, it merits some consideration. The first two kinds of depth apply in opposite ways to the link between each pair of factors. The "depth of meaning" (*atthagambhīratā*) applies to the link viewed from the standpoint of the effect looking back to its condition, the "depth of phenomena" (*dhammagambhīratā*) from the standpoint of the

1 For a tabular comparison of the two versions, see Table 1.

condition looking forward to its effect.[1] Each standpoint highlights a different kind of profundity. In the former case the profundity lies in the invariable *dependence of the effect on its condition*: how the effect always comes into being and continues with the support of its condition, never in the absence of the condition. In the latter case the profundity consists in the *efficacy of the condition*: how it exercises its causative role in relation to its effect.

The "depth of teaching" (*desanāgambhīratā*) refers to the diversity in methods used by the Buddha to expound dependent arising. The diversity is dictated by two considerations: first, by the complexity of the subject itself, which only reveals its multiple facets when illuminated from various angles; and second, by the persons being taught, who can only understand the teaching when its presentation is adapted to their needs and capacities. As the Buddha excels in both "eloquent exposition" and "skillful means," the result is the great variety in the methods of teaching the doctrine.

The fourth kind of depth, "depth of penetration" (*paṭivedhagambhīratā*), derives its meaning from the exegetical term *sabhāva*, "intrinsic nature," used in the commentaries to define the notion of *dhammā*, "phenomena." Etymologically, the word *dhamma* means that which supports; according to the commentarial gloss of the word, what they support is their own intrinsic nature.[2] At the ontological level a *dhamma* and its intrinsic nature coincide; there is no fundamental difference in mode of being between a thing and its nature. But epistemological purposes allow a distinction to be drawn between them. The *dhamma* then becomes the phenomenon in its concreteness, the intrinsic nature the set of qualities it actualizes. The intrinsic nature includes both the "particular characteristic" (*visesalakkhaṇa*), i.e. the qualities determining the *dhamma* as a thing of a particular sort—as earth element, a feeling, a volition, etc.—and the "general characteristics" (*sāmaññalakkhaṇa*), the features it shares with other things, especially the triad of impermanence, suffering, and not-selfness. It is through the characteristics that the intrinsic nature of the *dhamma* is penetrated during the development of insight (*vipassanā*). Therefore, for each factor of dependent arising, the commentary enumerates the principal characteristics, which the subcommentary takes up for elucidation.

Shortly after his enlightenment, while still pondering whether or not to teach the Dhamma to others, the Buddha had realised that "a generation delighting in attachment" would meet difficulty in understanding dependent arising (*M.26/i.167*). Now, with the closing sentence of the introductory section, he states the consequence of not understanding it. Because it has not understood and penetrated "this Dhamma" of dependent arising, "this generation" — the world of living beings — has become entangled in defilements and wrong views and thus cannot escape from saṁsāra, the round of rebirths, "with its plane of misery, unfortunate destinations, and lower realms." The statement confirms the depth of dependent arising even without need for further argument or discussion. The whole world of living beings revolves in the round of birth and death, repeatedly returning to the lower worlds, because of its failure to comprehend this one principle. The penetration of dependent arising therefore becomes a matter of the utmost urgency. It is the gateway to liberation through which all must pass who seek deliverance from the round.

1 The two words *attha* and *dhamma* have been rendered here as "meaning" and "phenomena" for the sake of consistency with the rest of the translation and because that seems to be their intended literal meaning. Puzzlement may arise over the connection between the commentary's explanations of the two "depths" and the lead terms "meaning" and "phenomena." The key to this connection is found in the *Visuddhimagga* (pp. 485-6), which in elucidating the two terms *atthapaṭisambhidā*, "analytical knowledge of meaning," and *dhammapaṭisambhidā*, "analytical knowledge of phenomena," explains *attha* as a term for the effect of a cause (*hetuphala*) and *dhamma* as a condition (*paccaya*). In support of this interpretation, the commentator quotes the *Vibhaṅga* (of the Abhidhamma Pitaka): "Knowledge about aging and death is the analytical knowledge of phenomena .....Knowledge about formations is the analytical knowledge of meaning; knowledge about the origin of formations is the analytical knowledge of phenomena."

2 *Attano pana sabhāvaṁ dhārenti ti dhammā*. Dhs. A. 39. Despite this definition, the commentaries allow to *dhamma* a wider range of meaning than *sabhāva*. Thus there are *dhammā* which do not support a *sabhāva*, namely, certain conceptual entities and the attainment of cessation. See the note on the two terms by Ven. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, Vism., p. 317, n. 68.

Specific Conditionality

The rest of the sutta, according to the commentary, develops from the Buddha's two pronouncements of ¶1: "this dependent arising is deep", and "this generation has become like a tangled skein". The former leads into the first main division of the sutta, the detailed account of dependent arising (¶2-22); the latter is followed up in the second main division, in which the Buddha undertakes a methodical investigation of views of self (¶23-32). All these sections are technically classified as "exposition of the round" (*vaṭṭakathā*); they illustrate the noble truths of suffering and its origin. But the Buddha also teaches the ending of the round (*vivaṭṭakathā*), the noble truths of the cessation of suffering and the path. These truths are shown elliptically in the third and final division of the sutta (¶33-35). They are represented by the arahat, the liberated one, who has disentangled the chain of conditions and passed beyond the confines of the round.

The Buddha begins his instruction proper with a short catechism on dependent arising intended to elicit the condition for each dependent factor in the series (¶2). The catechism pursues the series in reverse order from aging and death being dependent on birth back to consciousness being dependent on mentality materiality. He then states the entire sequence again in forward order, without the catechism, adding the regular refrain identifying the series as the origin of suffering (¶ 3). This completes the brief account, conspicuous by the absence of three familiar factors—ignorance, volitional formations, and the six sense bases. There then follows a longer exposition in which the Buddha returns to each proposition of the original sequence and elaborates upon its meaning. His explanation serves three main purposes: (i) to elucidate the meaning of specific conditionality by showing what is involved when one phenomenon is called a specific condition for another; (ii) to facilitate a more precise understanding of dependent arising by analyzing the conditioning factors into their constituents; and (iii) to demonstrate how each condition contributes to the arising of the state dependent on it.

In the sutta the Buddha does not offer a formal definition of specific conditionality; even the abstract formula is not mentioned. But the explanation of the connection between each pair of factors suffices to make the underlying principle clear. Specific conditionality is a relationship of indispensability and dependency: the indispensability of the condition (e.g. birth) to the arisen state (e.g. aging and death), the dependency of the arisen state upon its condition. The sutta explanation accentuates the minimal requirement for one phenomenon to be the condition for another. It shows conditionality determined negatively, as the impossibility of the dependent state appearing in the absence of its condition. Other suttas characterize conditionality in more positive terms, as a contributory influence passing from the condition to the dependent state. This much is already implied by the second phrase of the abstract formula: "With the arising of this, that arises". Elsewhere more is added. The condition originates (*samudaya*) the dependent state, provides it with a source (*nidāna*), generates it (*jātika*), gives it being (*pabhava*), nourishes it (*āhāra*), acts as its foundation (*upanisā*), causes it to surge (*upayāpeti*).[1] The commentaries too, show their sensitivity to this twofold meaning of conditionality when they first define a condition as a state indispensable to another state's arising or presence, then add "a condition has the characteristic of assisting, for any given state that assists the presence or arising of a given state is called the latter's condition" (Vism. XVII.68.p.612).

When dependent arising is explained in terms of indispensability, this cautions us against interpreting it as a principle of causal necessitation. Though the condition can take on an active causal role in arousing the dependent state, it does not necessitate the latter. In certain cases an inseparable bond connects the two, so that whenever one arises the other is bound to follow, e.g. birth is always followed by death. But there are other cases where such a bond is lacking, where the condition can occur without arousing the dependent state. As abstruse as this point may seem, it has the profoundest implications for a teaching of deliverance. For if dependent arising described a series in which each factor necessitated the next, the series could never be broken. All human effort directed to liberation would be futile and the round would have to turn forever. But a relationship of conditionality, unlike a necessitarian one, allows for a margin of freedom in responding to the condition. The place in the sequence

1 See S. XII. 11, 23, 27, 66, 69.

of conditions where that margin takes on the greatest importance is the link between feeling and craving. It is at that brief moment when the present resultant phase has come to a culmination in feeling, but the present causal phase has not yet begun, that the issue of bondage and liberation is decided. If the response to feeling is governed by ignorance and craving, the round continues to revolve; if the response replaces craving with restraint, mindfulness, and methodical attention, a movement is made in the direction of cessation.

Though the formula for dependent arising presents the factors in a linear sequence, this should not be taken to imply that they fit together in a temporally progressive chain of causes and effects. As was pointed out earlier, the selection of factors and their sequential arrangement are made from the instructional point of view, the purpose being to expose the inner dynamics of the round in order to demonstrate how to dismantle it. By resorting to abstraction, each phrase in the formula treats as a one-to-one bond what is in actuality a situation of immense complexity involving a multitude of conditions arousing and sustaining a multitude of dependent phenomena. In some cases a strong causal influence operates from one factor to another, in others the relation is one of mere necessary dependence. In some cases the formula describes a movement from condition to effect occupying time, even a succession of lives; in others it portrays a cross-section of events occurring at the same moment.

To clarify the relationship beteween each conditioning factor and its dependent state, the exegetical texts apply the system of twenty-four conditional relations set forth in the Paṭṭhāna, the seventh and last book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. The commentary does so summarily, generally mentioning only the major headings of conascence condition and decisive support condition; in more complicated cases it simply says that one is a condition for the other "in many ways." The subcommentary expands the summary, enumerating the types of conditions subsumed under the major headings and spelling out the "many ways." In the Appendix the twenty-four conditions have been briefly sketched and exemplified in their application to dependent arising. Thus here only the two main conditions will be discussed.

The conascence and decisive support conditions are the primary examples of two contrasting kinds of conditional relationship, distinguished by their temporal mode. Conascence is the prototype of the tie between simultaneous phenomena, things sharing a common origination and cessation. It includes under itself such other conditions of the Paṭṭhāna system as mutuality, support, association, and presence; some of these are narrower in scope (e.g. mutuality), others broader (e.g. presence). Decisive support is the most prominent condition relating non-simultaneous phenomena. It signifies the powerful causal influence one thing may exert on another when they are separated by an interval of time—either a moment's lapse (object decisive support), immediate succession (proximity decisive support), or an extended period (natural decisive support). There are other conditional relations which do not fall neatly under these two headings, but these two suffice to show the diversity possible in the interrelations of the factors of dependent arising. Such diversity precludes attempts to force these relations into a uniform mould either of simultaneity or succession, errors occasionally committed by earlier interpreters of the doctrine.

The Sequence of Conditions

In the Mahānidāna Sutta the Buddha expounds the sequence of conditions in reverse order. Conceptually there may be be no difference in meaning whether the sequence is presented in forward order or in reverse. But the Buddha's exposition of the Dhamma has another purpose besides the bare communication of conceptual meaning. That purpose is to lead on—to arouse the will and set it moving towards the intended goal of the teaching, the cessation of suffering. The reverse order presentation of the sequence serves that purpose with an effectiveness unmatched by the other. The forward order presentation expounds dependent arising from the standpoint of completed comprehension: it is the Buddha revealing to others what he has himself fully fathomed from the bottom up. The reverse order presentation expounds the series from the standpoint of existential inquiry. It at once confronts the auditor with the problem of his being, then takes him on a step by step descent down the chain of conditions that underlies that problem. In so doing it recapitulates

the process by which the future Buddha himself discovered dependent arising, and thence tends to kindle a spark of the same enlightenment.[1]

The series begins with aging and death as the epitome of the suffering inherent in existence. This is the spur which awakens a sense of urgency and sets off the search for a solution. The statement that aging and death occur with birth as condition (¶ 4) drives home the point that suffering is ineluctable. Merely to have come into being, to have taken up a body, is to be thrown irresistibly towards decline, decay, and death by nothing else than the passage of time itself. But the statement has another side: it points in the direction of a solution. Whatever suffering there is, all that is conditioned. It occurs in dependence on birth. If birth also is dependent on some condition, and that condition can be removed, then it would be possible to end all suffering. Birth is the first point in each individual existence, the moment of conception. Conception, the Buddha teaches, does not occur through biological causes alone; it also involves a stream of consciousness passing over from a previous life. Thus the inquiry into the specific condition for birth takes us back beyond the moment of conception into the life which preceded it.

The condition for birth, the Buddha says, is existence (¶ 5). This he analyzes as threefold: sense sphere existence (*kāmabhava*), fine material existence (*rūpabhava*), and immaterial existence (*arūpabhava*). Ordinarily these terms denote the realms of existence, the three successive tiers of saṁsāra into which rebirth can take place. But because rebirth into each realm is brought about through a particular kind of kamma, the word, "existence" comes to be transferred from the realm to the kamma conducing to rebirth into that realm. The two are distinguished as kamma-existence (*kammabhava*) and rebirth-existence (*uppattibhava*).[2] Since rebirth-existence includes birth, the exegetical tradition interprets the existence that conditions birth as kamma-existence—the kamma of the previous life that generates the succeeding birth and sustains vital forces throughout the entire span of life. Thus "sense sphere existence" is the kamma leading to the sense sphere realm i.e. all unwholesome kamma and wholesome kamma short of the meditative attainments; "fine material existence" is kamma leading to the fine material realm, i.e. the four jhānas; "immaterial existence" is the kamma leading to the immaterial realm, i.e. the four immaterial attainments. As the kamma producing new existence obviously requires time before it can show its results, existence is a condition for birth as a decisive support condition, not as a conascence condition.

The specific condition for existence in both aspects is clinging (*upādāna*): clinging to sense pleasures (*kām'upādāna*), clinging to views (*diṭṭh'upādāna*), clinging to precepts and observances (*sīlabbat'upādāna*), and clinging to a doctrine of self (*attavād'upādāna*) (¶ 6). The first is an intensification of sensual craving, the other three adherences to wrong views. In all its forms clinging has the sense of firm grasping. This grasping induces motivated action and thence conditions kamma-existence. It also sustains the rebirth process whereby the accumulated kamma fructifies and thus becomes a condition for rebirth-existence.[1]

The specific condition for clinging is craving. In the sutta craving has been subdivided in two ways: first by way of its immediate object, into craving for each of the six sense objects (¶7); second, by way of its projected aim, into craving for sense pleasures (*kāmataṇhā*), craving for existence (*bhavataṇhā*), and craving for non-existence (*vibhavataṇhā*) (¶ 18). Sensual craving and clinging to sense pleasures signify the same mental factor, greed or lust (*lobha*), at different stages of intensity. The former is the initial desire for sense enjoyment, the latter the attachment which sets in through the repeated indulgence of the desire. Craving also gives rise to the clinging to views, generally to the view that favours its dominant urge. Thus craving for existence leads to a belief in the immortality of the soul, craving for non-existence to a theory of personal annihilation at death. Craving for sense pleasures can give rise either to an annihilationist view justifying

1 See S. XII.65/ii.104-5).

2 The distinction is explicitly drawn, with full definitions, in the *Vibhaṅga* (p.137) It does not seem to be stated as such in the suttas, but may have been based on such passages as the following: "'If, Ānanda, there were no kamma ripening in the sense sphere realm, would sense sphere existence be discerned?' — 'Certainly not, venerable sir' " (A.III.76/i.223). The *Paṭisambhidāmagga* too treats existence, in the context of dependent arising, as identifiable with volition, thus as kamma (Pṭs. i.52).

1 See the Appendix for a treatment of this link by way of the *Paṭṭhāna* system of conditions.

full indulgence here and now, or to an eternalist view promising a heaven of delights to those with the prudence to exercise present restraint.[1]

Craving can become a condition for clinging to sense pleasures only as a decisive support, since by their definitions a time lapse must separate the two. But it can condition the other three kinds of clinging under both headings. It is a decisive support when earlier craving leads to the subsequent adoption of a wrong view, a conascence condition when craving co-exists with the view being adhered to through its influence.

Craving, in turn, comes to be with feeling as condition. Feeling (*vedanā*) is the affective tone of pleasure, pain, or their absence, which occurs on every occasion of experience through any of the six sense faculties. Craving can arise in response to all three kinds of feeling: as the yearning for pleasant feeling, the wish to flee from painful feeling, the relishing of the dull peace of neutral feeling. But its strong support is pleasant feeling. For craving "seeks enjoyment here and there," and the enjoyment it seeks it finds in pleasant feeling. Pleasant feeling therefore becomes the "bait of the round" (*vaṭṭāmisa*) which maintains the insatiable drive for enjoyment.

In the usual sequence, immediately after eliciting feeling as the condition for craving, the Buddha brings in contact as the condition for feeling. Here, however, he introduces a variation. From feeling he returns to craving and then extracts from craving a new series of nine factors, each arising in dependence on its predecessor (¶ 9). Craving leads to the *pursuit* of the objects desired, and through pursuit they are eventually *gained*. When gained one makes *decisions* about them: what is mine and what is yours, what is valuable and what disposable, how much I will keep and how much enjoy. Because of these decisions, thoughts of *desire and lust* arise. One develops *attachment* to the objects, adopts a *possessive* attitude towards them, and falls into *stinginess*, refusing to share things with others. Regarding everyone else with fear and suspicion, one seeks to *safeguard* one's belongings. When such greed and fear become widespread, they need only a slight provocation to explode into the violence, conflicts, and immorality spoken of in the sutta as "various evil, unwholesome phenomena."

1 For a fuller discussion of the connection between craving and views, see *Net of Views*, pp. 35-36.

This summary makes the purpose of the digression clear: it is to show that the principle of dependent arising can be used to understand the origins of social disorder just as effectively as it can be used to understand the origins of individual suffering. Like all other problems, the ailments of society arise from causes, and these can be traced in a sequence leading from the manifestations to the underlying roots. The conclusion drawn from this inquiry is highly significant: the causes of social disharmony lie in the human mind and all stem ultimately from craving.[1] Thus craving turns out to be the origin of suffering in more ways than one. It brings about not only continued rebirth in samsāra with its personal pain and sorrow, but also the cupidity, selfishness, violence, and immorality that wreck all attempts to establish peace, cooperation, and social stability. The commentary labels the two sides of craving as "craving which is the root of the round" and "obsessional craving." But it should be noted that the two expressions do not denote distinct types of craving; they simply point out different angles from which any given instance of craving can be viewed. For the craving that results in disorder and violence at the same time generates unwholesome kamma and maintains the round, while the craving for pleasure and existence that maintains the round also leads to the breakdown of social harmony.

Whether craving be viewed as a "root of the round" or as an obsession leading to greed and violence, it finds its condition in feeling. Feeling, in turn, originates from contact (*phassa*). Contact is the "coming together" (*saṅgati*) of consciousness with an object through a sense faculty. The six sense faculties—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind—are the internal bases for

1 The Mahānidāna Sutta is not the only discourse of the Buddha which applies dependent arising to the analysis of societal problems. Some other suttas which investigate the chain of conditions underlying social disorder are the Sakkapañha Sutta (D.21), the Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta (M.13), and the Kalahavivāda Sutta (Sn.IV.11). Despite minor differences in formulation, the conclusions reached are the same.

contact, the corresponding six sense objects the external bases. Contact is distinguished as sixfold by way of the internal bases (¶ 19). Simultaneously with its arising, feeling also springs up, conditioned by it under the heading of conascence.

The next section of the discourse introduces another variation. In the standard exposition of dependent arising the sequence moves from contact so the six sense bases. In the Mahānidāna Sutta, however, the Buddha bypasses the six sense bases entirely and goes back a step to bring in mentality-materiality as the condition for contact. To dispel the perplexity this unfamiliar move might provoke, he then introduces a striking passage, not found elsewhere in the Canon, giving a methodical demonstration of his statement. As the passage employs several technical terms not defined either here or in other suttas, interpretation cannot be settled by scholarship alone but also requires reflection and intuition. Before turning to the new terms however, it is best to review more familiar territory.

"Mentality-materiality" (*nāmarūpa*) is a compound term usually used in the suttas to signify the psychophysical organism exclusive of consciousness, which serves as its condition. The suttas define the term analytically as follows:

> "What, bhikkhus, is mentality-materiality? Feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention—this is called mentality. The four primary elements and the material form deriving from them — this is called materiality. Thus this mentality and this materiality are called mentality-materiality.". (S.XII.2/ii.3-4)

When mentality-materiality is correlated with the five aggregates, materiality is identified with the aggregate of material form (*rūpa*), mentality with the three aggregates of feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and mental formations (*saṅkhārā*).[1] Occasionally in the suttas the range of the term is extended to include the external sense bases as well: "This body and external mentality-materiality, these are a duality. Dependent on this duality there is contact" (S.XII.19/ii. 24). In such cases mentality-materiality becomes the entire experiential situation available to consciousness, the sentient organism together with its objective spheres.

"Designation-contact" (*adhivacanasamphassa*) and "impingement-contact" (*paṭighasamphassa*) are two terms peculiar to the present sutta. The commentary identifies the former with mind-contact, the latter with the five kinds of sense contact, but it does not explore the special meanings attached to these terms. The significance emerges from the Buddha's argument demonstrating how mentality-materiality is the condition for contact. The Buddha says that designation-contact is impossible in the material body (*rūpakāya*) when those qualities distinctive of the mental body (*nāmakāya*) are absent, and impingement-contact is impossible in the mental body when those qualities distinctive of the material body are absent. Thus each kind of contact, in the way stipulated, depends upon both the mental body and the material body. As mentality and materiality are here described as bodies, it is clear that they are intended in the narrower sense, as two sides of the sentient organism, rather than in the broader sense as including the objective spheres.

The argument points to the special role of contact as the meeting ground of mind and the world. Though all experience involves the union of mind and the world, of consciousness and its objects, contact represents this union most eminently. By its very definition it requires an external base (the object), an internal base (the sense faculty), and consciousness (which from its own perspective is always internal to itself). But experience is a two-way street, and the union represented by contact can result from movement in either direction: from the mind outwards towards the world or from the world inwards towards the mind. Outward movement occurs on occasions of mind-consciousness, when

[1] Vism. XVII.187, pp. 644-5. According to commentarial etymology, the mental factors are called *nāma* because of their bending (*namana*) towards the object in the act of apprehending it. The commentaries also incorporate consciousness into *nāma* on the ground that it too cognizes by bending towards the object. Though *nāma* literally means "name," to use that as a rendering in the present context would be misleading. However, when the mental body is said to be necessary for "designation-contact," this shows that a connection between the original sense of "name" and the doctrinal sense of "mentality" still remains in view.

conceptual and volitional activity prevail, inward movement on occasions of sense consciousness, when the mind's relation to the objects is one of passive receptivity.[1]

Outward movement begins with designation, the act of naming. By ascribing names the mind organizes the raw data of experience into a coherent picture of the world. It fits things into its conceptual schemes, evaluates them, subordinates them to its aims. But designation cannot take place in a material body devoid of mentality. It requires the mental body to concoct and ascribe the labels, and each of the mental factors contributes its share. Even slight shades of difference between them show up in the chosen designation. Thus a difference in feeling may decide whether a person is called "friend" or "foe," a difference in perception whether a fruit is considered "ripe" or "unripe," a difference in volition whether a plank of wood is designated "future door" or "future tabletop," a difference in attention whether a distant object is designated "moving" or "stationary." When the designation is ascribed to the object, a union takes place of the designating consciousness with the designated object via the designation. That union is called "designation contact." As the discourse goes on, we will see that the process of designation acquires an increasingly more prominent role.

Designation-contact, as applied to external objects, presupposes sense perception to bring those objects into range of the designating consciousness. Sense perception begins with "impingement" (*paṭigha*), a technical term signifying the impact of an object on a sense faculty. When this impact is strong enough, a sense consciousness arises based on the appropriate sense faculty. The union that takes place when consciousness encounters the impingent object is termed "impingement-contact." Though properly belonging to mentality, impingement-contact cannot occur in the mental body alone. By definition it is contact occurring through the physical sense faculties, and thus requires the material body to provide the internal bases for its arising.

The two terms, impingement and designation, have a fundamental importance which ties them to dependent arising as a whole. They again indicate the basic oscillatory pattern of experience referred to earlier, its movement back and forth between the phases of reception and response. The receptive phase sees the maturation of the kammic inflow from the past; it is represented here by impingement issuing in sense consciousness. The responsive phase involves the formation of new kamma; it is represented by designation issuing in action. Each impingent object elicits from the mind an appropriate designation, and this sparks off an action considered the fitting response. Thus the relationship between impingement and designation depicts in cognitive terms the same situation depicted in conative terms by feeling and craving: the regeneration of the round of existence through present activity building upon the kammic inheritance from the past.

The Buddha's demonstration continues by way of synthesis. Without the mental factors there could be no designation-contact and without the material body with its sense faculties there could be no impingement-contact. Thus in the absence of both the mental body and the material body neither kind of contact could be discerned. The conclusion follows that contact is dependent on mentality-materiality, thence that mentality-materiality is the condition for contact[1].

One puzzle posed by this passage remains. In formulating his questions, it would have been quite sufficient for the Buddha to have worded the hypothetical clause simply in terms of the absence of the intended subject, e.g. "If the mental body were absent....." or "If the material body were absent .....", etc. Instead, quite uncharacteristically, he uses the more complex

1 To forestall a misunderstanding which might arise over the ensuing discussion, it should be pointed out here that mind-consciousness is not exclusively introspective, concerned solely with abstract ideas, images, and judgements. Besides arising through the mind door with purely ideational objects, it can also arise through the physical sense doors taking the five sense data as objects. All conceptual operations, including the designation and evaluation of sense experience, are the work of mind-consciousness. The five kinds of sense consciousness have the sole function of apprehending their respective sense objects, which they then make available to mind-consciousness for categorization and comprehension. "These five faculties — the faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body — have different domains, different objects, and do not experience each other's objective domains. The mind is the resort of these five faculties, and mind experiences their objective domains" (M.43/i.295).

1 It should be noted that although there can be no designation-contact *in the material body* without both mentality and materiality, there can be designation-contact in the mental body alone, apart from materiality, namely, in the four immaterial planes of existence. However, the converse does not hold. Since contact is a factor of the mental body there can be no contact of either kind in a bare material body devoid of mentality.

phrasing: "If those qualities, traits, signs, and indicators through which there is a description.....were all absent.....". The question comes up, then, why the Buddha resorts to this complicated mode of expression instead of using the simpler, more direct phrasing. Later developments in the sutta suggest an answer, but to discuss it we will have to wait until we come to them.

The Hidden Vortex

The next two paragraphs (¶ 21-22) bring the investigation of dependent arising to a climax by revealing a "hidden vortex" underlying the entire process of samsāric becoming[1]. This hidden vortex is the reciprocal conditionality of consciousness and mentality-materiality. The Buddha first establishes consciousness as the specific condition for mentality-materiality by demonstrating that it is indispensable to the latter at four different times: at conception, during gestation, at the time of emerging from the womb, and during the course of life (¶ 21). Consciousness is already a condition at the moment of conception since mentality-materiality can "take shape in the womb", i.e. form into an embryo, only if consciousness has "descended into the womb." The description of consciousness as descending is metaphorical; it should not be taken literally as implying that consciousness is a self-identical entity which transmigrates from one life to another. The Buddha expressly repudiates the view that "it is this same consciousness that travels and traverses (the round of rebirths)" (M.38/i.258). Consciousness occurs by way of process. It is not an ongoing subject but a series of transitory acts of cognition arising and passing away through conditions. Each act is particular and discrete—an occasion of eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, or mind-consciousness. Based on its sense faculty it performs its function of cognizing the object, then gives way to the next act of consciousness, which arises in immediate succession.

But though metaphorical, the phrase "descent of consciousness" makes an important point. It indicates that at conception consciousness does not arise totally anew, spontaneously, without antecedents, but occurs as a moment in a "continuum of consciousness" which has been proceeding uninterruptedly from one life to another through beginningless time. If, at the time the man and woman sexually unite, no such continuum of consciousness is available, kammically attuned to the situation, conception will not occur and there will be no formation of the embryo (M.38/i.266). In the commentaries the first occasion of consciousness in a new life is called the "rebirth-linking" consciousness (*paṭisandhiviññāṇa*). It is given this name because it "links together" the new existence with the previous one, thence with the entire past history of the series. Generated by a kammically formative consciousness of the previous life, it brings with it into the new life the whole stock of dispositions, character tendencies, and kamma accumulations impressed upon the continuum. At the moment the rebirth consciousness springs up in the womb, the other four aggregates comprised in mentality-materiality arise along with it. The fertilized ovum becomes the nucleus for the material body, consciousness itself directly calls up the factors of the mental body. Once locked together at conception, consciousness sustains mentality-materiality throughout the remainder of the life-span. Without it the body would collapse into a mass of lifeless matter, the mental factors become totally defunct.

But the relationship between the two is not one-sided. To show this, the Buddha alters his regular exposition of dependent arising. Instead of taking the series back as usual to volitional formations and ignorance, he reverses his last statement and says: "With mentality-materiality as condition there is consciousness" (¶ 22). Just as the embryo cannot form unless consciousness "descends" into the womb, so consciousness cannot start the new existence in the womb unless it "gains a footing" in mentality-materiality. Further, consciousness requires mentality-materiality not only at conception, but all through life. It depends on a vital functioning body with its brain, nervous system, and sense faculties. It also depends on the mental body, as there can be no cognition of an object without the more specialized functions performed by contact, feeling, perception, volition, attention, and the rest. Thus consciousness stands upon the whole complex of mentality-materiality, subject to the latter's

1 The image of a vortex is suggested by Bhikkhu Ñāṇānanda, *The Magic of the Mind*, (B.P.S., 1974), pp. 25ff.

fluctuations: "With the arising of mentality-materiality consciousness arises, with the ceasing of mentality-materiality consciousness ceases" (S.XXII.56/iii.61).

The disclosure of the essential interdependence of consciousness and mentality-materiality has momentous consequences for religious and philosophical thought. It provides the philosophical "middle way" between the views of eternalism and annihilationism, the two extremes which polarize man's thinking on the nature of his being. Each side of the conditioning relationship, while balancing the other, at the same time cancels out one of the two extremes by correcting its underlying error.

The declaration that consciousness depends on mentality-materiality counters the extreme of eternalism, the supposition that the person contains an indestructible, unchanging essence that can be regarded as a permanent self. Of all man's faculties, it is consciousness that most readily lends itself to the eternalist assumption, for a reason not difficult to understand. Everything within experience is seen to change, but the knowing of change remains constant and thus (to the reflective worldling) seems to require a constant knower, one who knows but does not change. This changeless knower must be the most fundamental factor in the act of knowing, and consciousness appears to fulfill this role best. For in reflection the other faculties, bodily and mental, all point to consciousness as their mainstay and support, while consciousness does not point to anything more basic than itself. Thus consciousness is cast in the role of the changeless self-existent subject, to be seized upon by the eternalist philosopher as the transcendental ego, by the religious thinker as the immortal soul[1]. Once consciousness is so apotheosized, the other factors of the personality come to be regarded as its appendages, limiting adjuncts which obscure its intrinsic purity. From this the conclusion is drawn that if consciousness could only be separated from its appendages it would abide forever in its own eternal essence—for the monistic thinker as the universal self or the undifferentiated absolute, for the theist as the purified soul ready for union with God. To achieve this separation then becomes the goal of spiritual endeavour, approached via the religious system's specific disciplines.

The Buddha's revelation of the dependent nature of consciousness pulls the ground away from all idealistic attempts to make it an eternal self. In his own quest for enlightenment the Buddha-to-be refused to stop with consciousness as an impenetrable final term of inquiry. After he had pursued the sequence of conditions back to consciousness, he asked one further question, a question which for his time must have been incredibly bold: "What is the condition for consciousness?" And the answer came: "Then, bhikkhus, through methodical attention I comprehended with wisdom: 'When there is mentality-materiality consciousness comes to be. With mentality-materiality as condition there is consciousness ..... This consciousness turns back from mentality-materiality, it does not go beyond' (S.XII.65/ii.104).

Consciousness appears as an enduring subject due to lack of attention. When mindfully examined the appearance of lastingness is dissolved by the perception of its impermanence. Consciousness constantly arises and falls, and each new arising occurs through conditions: "In many ways the Exalted One has said that consciousness is dependently arisen. Apart from conditions there is no origination of consciousness" (M.38/i.258). In every phase of its being it is dependent on its adjuncts, without which it could not stand: "Bhikkhus, though some recluse or brahmin might say: 'Apart from material form, apart from feeling, apart from perception, apart from mental formations, I will describe the coming and going of consciousness, its passing away and rearising, its growth, development, and maturation' — that is impossible" (M.102/ii.230). Consciousness "turns back" from mentality-materiality and "does not go beyond" in that it does not reach back to an absolute and indestructible mode of being. Far from releasing consciousness into eternity, the removal of

1 From the variety of formulated views of self, as will be seen below, it is clear that in principle anything in the personality can be identified as self. But for the spiritually sensitive worldling, consciousness is the prime candidate, as the Buddha indicates: "Bhikkhus, the uninstructed worldling can become disenchanted with this body; he can become dispassionate towards it and liberated from it.....But that which is called mind, mentation, and consciousness, with that he cannot become disenchanted; he cannot become dispassionate towards it and liberated from it. For what reason? Because for a long time, bhikkhus, the uninstructed worldling has been attached to this, appropriated it, and misapprehended it thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self.'" (S. XII.61/ii.94). The fourth partial-eternalist view of the Brahmajala Sutta (D. 1/i.21), too, regards the five physical faculties as an impermanent self "mind, mentation, and consciousness" as a permanent and changeless self, which "will remain the same just like eternity itself" (see *Net of Views*, pp. 72-73).

mentality-materiality brings only the end of consciousness itself: 'With the cessation of mentality-materiality consciousness ceases." For this reason, instead of seizing upon consciousness as the inalienable core of his being, the noble disciple of the Buddha contemplates it in a different light: "Whatever there is included in consciousness, he considers it as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, a blister or a dart, as misery, as affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as not-self" (M.64/i.435).

Taken by itself, the statement that consciousness is dependent upon mentality-materiality (especially materiality) might be understood to suggest the nihilistic view that individual existence utterly terminates at death. For, if consciousness requires the living body as support, and the body perishes with death, it would seem to follow that death brings the end of consciousness. There would then be no kammic efficacy of action, no fruition of good and evil deeds, and thus no solid basis for morality. To counter this error, the other proposition has to be taken into account: "with consciousness as condition there is mentality-materiality." Consciousness commences each existence. It is the first and primary factor which sets the new life going and without it conception could not occur at all. Consciousness is compared to the seed for the generation of new existence (A.III.76/i.223), and this comparison gives us the key. Just as the seed which sprouts into a young tree must come from a previous tree, so the "seed" of consciousness which starts the new life must come from consciousness in a previous life. What drives consciousness from one existence to another are the defilements of ignorance and craving; what gives it direction, determining it to particular forms of existence, are the volitions constituting kamma. These conditions brought consciousness from the past life into the present life, and as long as they remain operative they will propel it into a future life. The continuum of consciousness will again spring up established on a new physical base, and in that continuum kamma will find the field to bear its fruits. When the reciprocal conditionality of consciousness and its psychphysical adjuncts is properly understood, neither eternalism nor annihilationism can win assent.

Thus, locked in their vortical interplay, consciousness and mentality-materiality support each other, feed each other, and drive each other on, generating out of their union the whole

series of dependently arisen states ending in aging and death. No matter how far back the round is traced into the past the same situation prevails: one will find only consciousness and mentality-materiality in mutual dependence, infected by ignorance and craving, never a first point when they began, never a time before which they were not. Again, no matter how far forward the round continues into the future, it will still be constituted by the same pair bound together as reciprocal conditions. The two in union are at once the ground of all existence and the "stuff" of all existence. In any attempt to explain the round they are the final terms of explanation.

This is the purport of the Buddha's words (¶ 22): "It is to this extent that one can be born, age, and die, pass away and rearise ..... to this extent that the round turns for describing this state of being, that is, when there is mentality-materiality together with consciousness." The subcommentary succinctly conveys the sense of this statement in its gloss on the phrase "to this extent" ("by this much"): "Not through anything else besides this, through a self having the intrinsic nature of a subject or agent or through a creator God, etc." (p.107).

The Pathway for Designation

The concluding sentence of ¶ 22 contains another statement whose implications and connection with the discourse as a whole require exploration: "(it is) to this extent that there is a pathway for designation, to this extent that there is a pathway for language, to this extent that there is a pathway for description, ... that is, when there is mentality-materiality together with consciousness." As usual, the first step in unravelling the meaning is the elucidation of terms. "Designation" (*adhivacana*), "language" (*nirutti*), and "description" (*paññatti*), according to the subcommentary, are near synonyms signifying, with minor differences of nuance, verbal statements expressive of meaning. The "pathway" (*patha*) for designation, language, and description is the domain to which they apply, their objective basis. This, the commentary says, is the same in all three cases — the five aggregates, spoken of here as "mentality-materiality together with

consciousness."[1] Thus the passage can be taken to concern, in some elliptical way, the relation between concepts, language, and reality. But still the question remains as to the relevance of this to an exposition of the round.

To bring that relevance to light it is necessary to investigate briefly the nature of reference, the act which establishes connections between words and things. Designation, language, and description are the tools of reference, enabling us to interpret and evaluate our experience privately to ourselves and to communicate our thoughts to others. These tools of reference require referents. As means of designating, discussing, and describing, they necessarily point beyond themselves to a world of referents which they designate, discuss, and describe. That world is "the pathway for designation, language, and description." But reference involves more than simply the indicating of a referent. It also involves signification, the ascribing of meaning to the referent. While the referent provides the locus for meaning, the meaning itself is contributed by the mind making the reference. The section on contact should be recalled, where it was shown that designation depends upon the mental body.[2] It is in the mental body that designations, linguistic expressions, and descriptions take shape, and from there that they are ascribed, end-products of a complex process drawing upon the contributions of many individual mental factors. Like photographs turned out by a camera, the conceptual and verbal symbols that issue from the mental body can be no more accurate in representing actuality than the instrument which creates them is accurate in recording actuality. Distortion occuring in the process of cognition is bound to infiltrate the act of reference and leave its mark upon the conceptual scheme through which experience is interpreted. When feeling is seized upon as food for desire, when perception becomes a scanning device for finding pleasure, when volition is driven by greed and hate and attention flits about unsteadily, one can hardly expect the mental body to mirror the world "as it really is" in flawlessly precise concepts and expressions. To the contrary, the system of references that results will be a muddled one, reflecting the individual's biases, presuppositions, and wayward emotions as much as the things they refer to. Even when the assignment of meanings to terms conforms to the conventions governing their use, that is no guarantee against aberrant references; for often these conventions stem from and reinforce unrecognized common error, the "collective hallucinations" of the world.

Of all the tools of reference a person may use, those of greatest importance to himself are the ones that enable him to establish and confirm his sense of his own identity. These are the designations "mine," "I am," and "myself." In the Buddha's teaching such ideas and all related notions, in the way they are ordinarily entertained, are regarded as conceptual outcroppings of the ego-consciousness. They are fabrications of the mind (*mathita*), subjective conceivings (*maññita*), conceptual proliferations (*papañcita*) grounded in ignorance, craving, and clinging. But the "uninstructed worldling" (*assutavā puthujjana*), the individual unlearned and untrained in the Buddha's teaching, does not even suspect their falsity. Not knowing that their real origins are purely internal, he assumes they simply duplicate in thought what exists as concrete fact. Thus he takes them to possess objectively the meaning he ascribes to them, as standing for a self and its belongings. Caught up in his own deception, he then makes use of these notions as instruments of appropriation and identification. Through the designation "mine" he establishes a territory over which he claims control, through the designations "I am" and "myself" he establishes an identity upon which he builds his conceits and views.

The objects of these conceptual and verbal manipulations are the five aggregates. These are the referents, the "pathway for designation," to which the worldling's references necessarily refer: "There being material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, bhikkhus, it is referring to them, adhering to them (*upādāya abhinivissa*), that one considers 'This

1 A Samyutta sutta (S.XXII.62/iii.71-73) confirms this identification. It speaks of three "pathways for language, designation, and description": the five aggregates which have ceased are the pathway for the designation "was" (*ahosi*), those aggregates which have not yet arisen are the pathway for the designation "will be" (*bhavissati*), and those which have presently arisen are the pathway for the designation "is" (*atthi*). As the five aggregates include all phenomena whether internal or external, mentality-materiality here must be intended in the comprehensive sense, as including the outer sense bases.

2 The Cūlavedalla Sutta (M.44/i.301) expresses the same idea thus: "Having previously applied thought and sustained thought, afterwards one breaks out into speech. Therefore applied thought and sustained thought are verbal formations."

s mine, this I am, this is my self' " (S.XXII.150/iii.181-183). Correct designation requires that the referent be designated without overshooting its real nature by attributing to it some significance it does not have. But the worldling's cognitive processes, being under the dominion of ignorance, do not present things as they are in themselves. They present them in distorted forms fashioned by the defilements at work behind his cognition. Therefore, when he refers to the referents in thought and speech, his references are loaded with a charge of meaning deriving from their subjective roots. In his reflection upon his immediate experience he does not see simply material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. He reads his designations into the referents and comes up with: "Material form which is mine, which I am. Feeling ..... perception ..... mental formations ..... consciousness which is mine, which I am" (see S.XXII.1/iii.3-4). Since the worldling already sees a self when he considers his experience analytically, when he encounters dependent arising — which describes experience dynamically — he inevitably views it through the same distorting lens.

> (The Exalted One said:) "With the six sense bases as condition contact comes to be." — "Venerable sir, who makes contact?" — "Not a proper question. I do not say 'One makes contact.' If I should say 'One makes contact' it would be proper to ask: 'Who makes contact?' But I do not say this. Since I do not say this the proper question to ask me is: 'Through what condition does contact come to be?' To this the proper answer is: 'With the six sense bases as condition contact comes to be. With contact as condition feeling comes to be,." — "Venerable sir, who feels?" (S.XII.12/ii.13).

So it goes on all the way down the line. He sees *someone* who craves, who clings, who exists, who is born, who ages, who dies. He holds: "Aging and death are one thing, the one to whom they occur is another. Birth is one thing, the one to whom it occurs is another" (S.XII.35/ii.61). For him the whole vortical interplay of consciousness and mentality-materiality seems to revolve around a stable center, the "who" to whom it is happening. What he does not see and cannot see, as long as he remains immersed in his assumptions, is: "to this extent the round turns for describing this state of being, that is, when there is mentality-materiality together with consciousness."

With this we come upon the reason why the Buddha declares dependent arising to be so deep and difficult to understand. It is deep and difficult not simply because it describes the causal pattern governing the round, but because it describes that pattern in terms of bare conditions and conditioned phenomena without reference to a self. The challenge is to see that whatever happens in the course of existence is merely a conditoned event happening through conditions in a continuum of dependently arisen phenomena. It is not happening to anyone. There is no agent behind the actions, no knower behind the knowing, no transmigrating self passing through the round. What binds the factors of experience together, at any given moment and from moment to moment, is the principle of dependent arising itself — "when there is this, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises." This itself is sufficient because this by itself is adequate and complete.

By pointing to the juncture of consciousness and mentality-materiality as the pathway for designation, language, and description, the Buddha delimits the final domain of reference as the phenomena comprised in dependent arising. All concepts, words, and linguistic expressions emerge from these and all ultimately refer back to them. This includes such designations as "mine," "I," and "self," as well as the more elaborate verbal formulations employing them. Though such terms seem to imply a self as their referent, if that self is sought for it cannot be found. All that is found as the final referents are the five aggregates, and when these are methodically examined they fail to exhibit the qualities that would qualify them as self. Selfhood implies permanence, autonomy, and mastery over things; the five aggregates all turn out to be impermanent, conditioned, and unmasterable.

However, though a self and its belongings cannot be discovered, the conclusion does not follow that such words as "mine," "I" and "self" are to be proscribed. These words and their derivatives have a perfectly legitimate, even necessary, use as tools of communication. They are index terms for referring to situations

too complex for full descriptions phrased exclusively in terms of "bare phenomena." The Buddha and his disciples use them in their speech as freely as anyone else; but when used by them these terms do not betray underlying attitudes of craving, conceit, and wrong views, as is generally the case with their employment by others. For them the terms are entirely divested of their subjective overtones, used with a recognition of their purely referential function: "These, Citta, are merely names, expressions, turns of speech, designations in common use in the world. And of these a Tathāgata makes use, indeed, but he does not misapprehend them" (D.9/i.201-2).

The foregoing discussion suggests an answer to a puzzle mentioned earlier but left unresolved — that concerning the Buddha's manner of formulating his questions about the conditions for contact (see above, p. 21). The complex phrasing may be taken to imply a distinction between two kinds of entities: the fully actual phenomena pertaining to the "pathways for designation, language, and description" and the mental constructs derivative upon them.[1] The fully actual phenomena are things endowed with their own intrinsic natures (*sabhāva*); that is, the five aggregates. These things exist quite independently of conceptualization. They might be apprehended in thought and designated and described by words, but they do not depend upon thought and verbal expression for their being. They acquire being through their own conditions, which are other fully actual phenomena. Mental constructs, in contrast, have no being apart from conceptual formulation. They do not possess intrinsic natures, but exist solely in the realm of ideas and thought. They refer to actual phenomena and their components invariably derive from them, since the fully actual phenomena are the foundation and building blocks for all mental construction. But to form the construct, the given data have been pressed through various conceptual operations such as abstraction, synthesis, and imaginative embellishment. Consequently, the finished product is often difficult to trace back to its experiential originals.

1 In later scholastic terminology the contrast is between *pariniphannā dhammā* and *parikappitā dhammā*.

The criterion for distinguishing the two is implied by the sutta phrase "those qualities, traits, signs, and indicators through which there is a description of the mental (material) body." As things endowed with intrinsic natures, fully actual phenomena reveal their natures through certain characteristics, which are discovered as objective features of the world. By way of these characteristics — "those qualities," etc. — the phenomena are experienced immediately as objects of direct cognition, and this cognition validates their reality as things existing independently of conceptualization. The mental constructs, on the other hand, do not reveal their own distinctive "qualities, traits, signs, and indicators." Though they may be ascribed to the world as if fully actual, all attempts to locate them within the world through directly cognizable characteristics eventually turn out to be futile. Investigation always leads, on one side, to the mental processes responsible for the construction, on the other, to the "pathways" which provide the raw materials and the objective basis to which the completed constructs are ascribed.

The same passage also suggests certain principles regarding description. It implies that "veridical description," i.e., description true from the special standpoint of insight-contemplation, not only represents actuality correctly, but represents it solely in terms of what is discovered in contemplation — its constituent phenomena, their qualities, and their relations. Examples would be such statements as: "The earth element has the characteristic of hardness," consciousness that of cognizing an object," etc.; or "All material form is impermanent," etc.; or "Craving arises with feeling as condition," etc. Such description may be distinguished from "deviant description," which either posits mental constructs as actual existents (a Creator God, the world spirit, the personal soul, the absolute, etc.), or else ascribes to the actual phenomena attributes they only appear to possess due to cognitive distortion. The most important of these, from the standpoint of the Dhamma, are the appearances of beauty, pleasure, permanence, and self (*subha, sukha, nicca, attā*). The relevanace of this distinction to the sutta will become clear later, when we come to the section on descriptions of self.

The pathways for designation, language, and description are not all that the vortical interplay of consciousness and mentality-materiality makes possible. The Buddha says that it also makes possible a sphere for wisdom (*paññāvacara*). The sphere for wisdom is the pathways themselves: the five aggregates in process of dependent arising. As long as the aggregates are enveloped by ignorance, they become the basis for conceiving the deluded notions "mine," "I am," and "my self." But when they are examined with mindfulness and clear comprehension, they become transformed into the soil for the growth of wisdom. Wisdom works with the same set of referents, but exhibits them from a new point of view, one which leads to the abolition of all conceivings: "Whatever material form there is, whatever feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness — past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near — all that one sees with perfect wisdom as it really is: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self'. For one knowing and seeing thus, there are no more ego-conceptions, conceptions of 'mine', and underlying tendencies to conceit in regard to this conscious body and all external signs" (S.XII.91/iii.136).

Descriptions of Self

In the next section of the sutta (¶ 23) the Buddha seems to divert the discussion to a new topic apparently unrelated to the foregoing exposition. The commentary clarifies the movement of the discourse by pointing out that this new section refers back to the Buddha's original statement that "this generation has become like a tangled skein." The purpose is to elucidate this statement by identifying the tangles and showing how the process of entanglement has taken place. Thus the discussion is still concerned with the causal structure of the round, only now it approaches that structure from a different angle.

The reason "this generation has become like a tangled skein" is its failure to understand and penetrate dependent arising. The non-penetration of dependent arising is an aspect of ignorance, and ignorance (as the usual twelvefold formula shows) is the most fundamental condition for the round. Thus the basic factor responsible for the continued movement of dependent arising is the non-penetration of dependent arising itself. Or, to state the matter in different words, what keeps beings in bondage to the round is their own lack of insight into the conditioning process that keeps them bound.

Ignorance is a state of privation, an absence of true knowledge: knowledge of the four noble truths, of dependent arising, of the true characteristics of phenomena. But the mind, like nature, cannot tolerate a vacuum. So when true knowledge is lacking, something else in the guise of knowledge moves in to take its place. What moves in are views (*diṭṭhi*). Views are erroneous opinions about the nature of the world, personal existence, and the way to deliverance. They range from simple unexamined assumptions, to formulated doctrines, to theories and speculations, to elaborate systems of belief. Views generally pose as detached, sober, rational attempts at understanding ultimate issues. But beneath this pose they create a tremendous amount of trouble — confusion within and conflicts without. In their vast diversity, their lack of sound foundations, their internal contradictions and mutual incompatibility, views give little ground for confidence. That is why, in adhering to them, "this generation has become like a tangled skein." Views are the tangles, knots, and matting in the works that prevent it from passing beyond saṁsāra.

Earlier it was said that of all the designations a person uses, those most important to himself are the ones that confirm his sense of his own identity. By the same token, of the numerous views a person may hold, those held to with the greatest tenacity are his views of self, which define for him that identity. The Buddha has shown that behind these views of self lies an enormously powerful investement of emotion. The emotion comes from craving, and when it is invested in a particular view it turns that view into an instrument of clinging. Thus an examination of views of self, far from diverting the discussion from dependent arising, actually focuses it in more closely upon a specific factor in the sequence of conditions — namely, upon clinging in its mode of "clinging to a doctrine of self" (*attavād'upādāna*). In this mode clinging takes on a role of critical importance, for it represents that point in the unfolding of the conditions where ignorance and craving — in themselves blind forces — acquire an intellectual justification. They join up with the intellect to create for themselves a conceptualized view of self, which protects them

Having determined the nature of self, the theorist next considers its future destiny (¶ 24), an issue of vital importance to himself as it concerns the fate of his cherished identity. Temporal speculations admit of three possibilities, which in principle can be combined with any of the four basic views.[1] The first two are clear: the annihilationist view (*uccheda-vāda*) that the self exists only in the present life and utterly perishes at death, and the eternalist view (*sassata-vāda*) that the self continues permanently into the future. The third proposition is perplexing even in the Pali; the translation given in the text below renders it as literally as possible. The commentary interprets the statement as indicating the dispute between the annihilationist and the eternalist: each declares his intention to convert his opponent to his own viewpoint. But as the context requires a third view of the future of the self, an alternative interpretation might be suggested. Perhaps the passage can be taken to express the view that eternal existence is something the self must acquire. On this view the self is not everlasting by nature, but by making the appropriate effort it can be raised from transience to eternity. However, in the absence of corroboration from other sources, this interpretation must remain hypothetical.

In the sutta the Buddha does not explicitly criticize these speculations, but his statement about the pathway for description is enough to indicate where the theorists have gone astray. The descriptive content of their assertions is perfectly legitimate, as it draws entirely on what is given within experience: material and immaterial phenomena, limited and extended kasiṇa signs, present existence and future existence. The error lies in the ascription of this content to a self and in the consequent postulation of self's eternal existence or annihilation. With that step description has deviated from its proper pathway, for what is discovered within experience has been used to describe what can never be discovered but only presupposed — an unjustifiable move. The theorist, however, does not recognize his mistake. As he starts off with a "settled view of self," whatever he encounters, whether in his reasonings or his meditative attainments, will only go to confirm his preconception. In this way an unexamined assumption at an earlier stage becomes the basis for a firmly grasped error at a later stage.

A short section on "non-descriptions of self" (¶ 25-26) is included to contrast the speculative theorists with the followers of the Buddha's teaching, who on the basis of their own attainments, learning, or practice refrain from proposing descriptions of self. The key to this section is a sentence from the commentary: "They know that the counterpart sign of the kasiṇa is only a counterpart sign and that the immaterial aggregates are only immaterial aggregates." That is, they keep their descriptions well within the range of the describable. They do not overstep the limits by ascribing to real things an unreal significance, such as selfhood, eternal existence, or annihilation. If they describe their attainments in meditation, they describe them in terms of what is found by direct cognition: a constellation of dependently arisen phenomena all impermanent, suffering, and not-self.

Considerations of Self

Descriptions of self arise because, in his non-theoretical moments, the theorist engages in considerations of self (*attasamanupassanā*). Both the descriptions and considerations are views, but the considerations occupy a more elementary stage on the scale of subjectivity. Descriptions of self involve a high degree of reflection. They theorize about self, speculate over its destiny, advance reasoned arguments and proofs. Considerations of self are not entirely unreflective, but the reflection that goes into them lacks the elaborateness and refinement of the descriptions. Their basic function is to substantiate the idea of self by relating it to the given content of experience. For this reason the considerations are far more widespread than the descriptions. Few try to work out systematic views about the self, but almost everyone — whether commoner or philosopher — cherishes some notion about what he is beneath his names and forms. That notion is his consideration of self.

1 The phrase "in principle" is added because in actuality there is a tendency for certain of the basic views to combine with one of the temporal views more readily than with the other. Thus a description of self as limited and material will tend to the annihilationist mode, a description of self as infinite and immaterial will tend to the eternalist mode.

with a semblance of rationality. Therefore, in order to dislodge ignorance and craving, a preliminary step often becomes necessary: to take away their protective shield of views.

The Buddha begins his examination of views of self by laying out the different descriptions of self (*attapaññatti*) proposed by speculative thinkers. The title of the section and the frequent use of the word "describes" (*paññāpeti*) connect this discussion with earlier ones on description. In the closing statement of ¶ 22 the Buddha drew the boundaries to the domain of description as the five aggregates, implying that it is in terms of these factors that all legitimate description is formulated. The passage on contact (¶ 20) suggested that veridical description, valid from the viewpoint of insight contemplation, describes the world strictly in terms of its fully actual phenomena, their qualities, and their relations. Now, in this section on descriptions of self, the Buddha will show what happens when these stipulations are neglected, when thought oversteps its bounds and runs wild in the wilderness of its own conceivings.

Descriptions of self are the outcome of the worldling's attempt to work out a reflective interpretation of his existence. This task he invariably approaches by speculating about his self. Depending on his personal predilections, reasoning, and experience, he formulates (or adopts) a particular conception of self, then blows this up into a full-fledged theory accounting for its origins, destiny, and relation to the world. Not content simply to define his views to himself, he seeks to gain acceptance of them from others. Thus, to win adherents, he issues detailed descriptions of the self, offers arguments in favour of his doctrine, and tries to discredit the doctrines of his rivals.

In various suttas the Buddha has surveyed the results of speculative thought, the fullest treatment being the Brahmajāla Sutta with its sixty two views on the self and the world. In the present sutta he reduces this diversity to twelve views consisting of four primary positions each capable of appearing in three different modes. After explaining all the views the Buddha does not attempt to dispose of them with individual refutations. Such an approach does not generate genuine understanding; moreover, it would involve him in the same "scuffling of views," the doctrinal quarrels and contentions, he exhorts his own disciples to avoid. Instead of grappling with theoretical formulations, he pursues the adherence to views of self down to a more fundamental level where the speculative enterprise originates.

The worldling's endeavour to understand his existence always turns into speculations on self because he carries into his systematic thinking the everyday presupposition that self is the basic truth of his existence. This presupposition he accepts prior to and quite apart from all serious reflection; indeed he does not even recognize it as a presupposition, for the reason that he perceives a self as inherent in his experience. Conceptually he tries to pinpoint this self in relation to the experiential situation, and this results in "considerations of self," which become the pre-speculative basis for his more systematic "descriptions of self." The Buddha's method of dealing with views in this sutta is to pass directly from the descriptions of self to the underlying consideratcns. He sets forth the alternative ways of considering self, examines them, and shows that none can stand up under scrutiny. When all possible ways of considering self are seen to be defective, logic leads back to the conclusion (not explicitly drawn in the sutta) that none of the descriptions of self is tenable.

The section on descriptions of self prepares the way for the Buddha's critique by exhibiting the speculative views of self in their mutual opposition (¶ 23). The commentary explains that these views can arise either from meditative experience or from bare reasoning. In the case where they arise from meditative experience, the commentary treats them (perhaps too narrowly) as originating from misinterpretations of the "kasiṇa sign," the inwardly visualized image of the meditation object. If the sign itself is apprehended as self, self will be conceived as material; if the area covered by the sign, or the mental factors contemplating it, is apprehended, self will be conceived as immaterial. If the sign is unextended, i.e. confined to a small area, self will be conceived as limited; if the sign is extended as far as visualization will allow, self will be conceived as infinite. Permutation of these paired alternatives yields four primary ways of describing self.

aggregates.[1] This suggests certain connections with the developed descriptions of self: the first and third considerations lead to the description of self as immaterial, the second to the description of self as "having material form."[2]

As these three formulations are exhaustive, when the Buddha shows them all to be unacceptable the view of self is left without a foothold. It should be pointed out, however, that the Buddha does not refute the three views with independent lines of argument. He employs the method of *reductio ad absurdum*. Starting with the theorist's own premises, he shows that if the implications of his position are clearly spelled out, it leads to consequences he himself would not be willing to accept. Thus the Buddha's demonstration undermines each view from within itself; or rather, it shows that each view is already undermined from within itself by its own implicit internal contradictions.

The Buddha examines first the view that feeling is self (¶ 28-29). The theorist who asserts this view is asked to state *which* kind of feeling he considers as self: pleasant feeling, painful feeling, or neither-pleasant-nor-painful feeling.[3] These three kinds of feeling are distinct and mutually exclusive. Only one can be experienced at a time. Thus when one kind of feeling has arisen, the other two are, necessarily absent. Calling attention to this diversity in feeling already deals a blow to the notion of self. It exposes feeling as a succession of distinct states lacking the enduring identity essential to selfhood.

If feeling is self, whatever attributes belong to feeling also belong to self and whatever happens to feeling also happens to self. Since feeling is impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, and subject to destruction, it would follow that the same pertains to self. This is a conclusion the theorist could not accept, as it contradicts his conception of self as permanent, unconditioned, independent, and indestructible; yet his initial thesis forces it upon him. Further, all feeling ceases and disappears, so if one identifies a particular feeling as self, with the ceasing of that feeling one would have to assert that self has disappeared — for the theorist an unthinkable situation, as it would leave him without the self he is seeking to establish.

The theorist might try to salvage his position by refusing to tie self down to particular feelings. Instead he regards feeling in general as self. But this position leads to snags of its own. Self would still be impermanent, as with the breakup of each feeling self would undergo dissolution. As the qualities of selfhood must attach to all feelings, the three mutually exclusive feelings would have to share the permanence attributed to self. Thus all feelings would somehow exist at all times and self would be a compound of different feelings, an impossible conclusion. Moreover, as feeling is observed to constantly arise and pass away, self would do so likewise, in direct contradiction to the unstated premise that selfhood necessarily excludes arising and passing away.[1] Therefore, as self would turn out to be "impermanent, a mixture of pleasure and pain, and subject to arising and falling away," the view that feeling is self is unacceptable.

The second view, which asserts self to be altogether without experience of feeling, the commentary identifies as the view that self is bare material form. The Buddha rejects the view of a completely insentient self on the ground that such a self could not even conceive the idea "I am" (¶ 30). The argument is based on the theorist's presupposition (again unstated) that selfhood requires some degree of self-consciousness. Ascribing selfhood to something which cannot affirm its own existence as a self defeats the very purpose of claiming selfhood. The dependency of the idea "I am" on feeling implicity refers back to the section on contact (¶ 20). Feeling is part of the mental body, and without the factors of the mental body designation-contact (in this case, the designation "I am") cannot occur in

1 In making this specification, the commentary assumes that every conception of selfhood implies a positive identification of self with one or another of the aggregates. However, if the alternatives laid out by the Buddha are intended to mirror ordinary thought patterns, insistence on such definiteness may go too far. In ordinary thought (and even in reflection) self may be given an identity simply by being set in relationship to the aggregates, without necessarily being equated with them either individually or collectively. The crucial point is this: that any attempt to identify self must refer it to the aggregates, and this sets the stage for the demolition of the identification, as we will see.

2 Cf. the Upanishadic conception of the self as pure bliss (*ānanda*).

1 The argument is more fully stated in the Chachakka Sutta: "If anyone should say, 'Feeling is self,' that is not tenable. For an arising and a falling away of feeling are discerned. Since its arising and falling away are discerned, the consequence would follow: 'My self arises and falls away.' Therefore it is not tenable to say 'Feeling is self.' Thus feeling is not self" (*M.*148/iii.283).

The problem of finding some identity for self arises because the worldling continually conceives his experience with the idea "I am." This idea — called a conceit (*māna*), a desire (*chanda*), and underlying tendency (*anusaya*), but not a view (see S.XXII.89/iii.130) — crops up spontaneously in his mind due to the basic ignorance. The worldling accepts the idea "I am" as indicating what it seems to indicate, a self. "Self" is the notion of a truly existent "I," an "I" which is not a mere referential designation but an enduring center of personal identity. The worldling embraces this idea of self as an overwhelming certainty; at the same time, however, it remains for him an enigma. Self is his identity, what he really is at the core of his being, yet it never reveals *its own* identity, freely and openly, to direct cognition. Its identity is always something that has to be figured out, not something it clearly manifests. However, since the worldling finds the idea of self unimpeachable, he feels it must have some identity, and thus (without quite being aware that he is doing so) he proceeds to give it one.

To provide it with an identity he must make use of the material available to him for consideration, and that is the five aggregates. Thus all considerations of self are formulated with reference to the aggregates: "Those recluses and brahmins, bhikkhus, who considering self consider it in various ways, all consider the five aggregates or a certain one of them" (S.XXII.47/iii.46). Since the five aggregates constitute the person (*sakkāya*), the view of a self existing in relation to the aggregates is called "personality view" (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*). Personality view can assume twenty forms, arrived at by conceiving self in four ways relative to each aggregate: "Herein, bhikkhu, an uninstructed worldling, who is without regard for the noble ones ..... considers material form as self, or self as possessing material form, or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He considers feeling ..... perception ..... mental formations ..... consciousness as self, or self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. Thus, bhikkhu, there is personality view" (S.XXII.82/iii.102).

With personality view the indeterminate "I am" receives a determinate identity. It is transformed into the designation "this I am," where the "this" represents the content the aggregates provide for identifying the conceptually vacuous "I."[1] Once the "I" is defined in thought, speculation takes over to elaborate more specific views about its past and future and other matters of vital concern. Thus all speculative flights on the self's nature and destiny begin with the inherent tendency to conceive the person as self. If speculative views be regarded as the knots that bind the worldling to the round, personality view can be considered the rope:

> Bhikkhus, this saṁsāra is without conceivable beginning. No first point is discerned of beings roaming and wandering (in saṁsāra); hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving. Just as a dog, tethered by a leash and tied to a stout pole or post keeps running and circling around that same pole or post, in the same way, bhikkhus, the uninstructed worldling, who is without regard for the noble ones ..... considers material form as self ..... or self as in consciousness. He keeps running and circling around that same material form, that same feeling, that same perception, those same mental formations, that same consciousness. Running and circling thus, he is not released from material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness; he is not released from birth, aging and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair, he is not released from suffering, I declare. (S. XXII.99/iii.150).

In the Mahānidāna Sutta the Buddha does not investigate the whole gamut of personality view in all its twenty forms. Instead he selects one aggregate, the aggregate of feeling, as representative of the lot and then examines three alternative ways it can be made a basis for conceiving self. One who recognizes a self either considers feeling as self, or self as altogether without feeling, or self as distinct from but subject to feeling (¶ 27). According to the commentary, the second is the view that self is matter, the third the view that self is a combination of the other three mental

1 If the Buddha's earlier words about the pathway for description are seen as anticipating his exposition of "descriptions of self," perhaps it would not be going too far to see the words about the pathway for designation as relating in a similar way to "considerations of self." The designations would be the thoughts "this I am" and "this is my self" that finalize these considerations. The middle term "language" could then be taken to signify the outward verbal expression of both the designations and the descriptions, which in themselves need not be so expressed. These correlations, however, are conjectural.

the material body. A material body without feeling does not affirm self and thus cannot be self; it remains only a mass of matter.

The third view attempts to avoid the faults of the first two positions by making self the subject of feeling (¶31). As on this view self remains distinct from feeling, the impermanence of feeling need not undermine the permanency of self. As self undergoes feelings, the absurdity of a totally insentient self is sidestepped. This position in effect establishes a dualism of self and the psychophysical faculties as its adjuncts. The self cannot be reduced to the adjuncts and thus does not share their vicissitudes; but it enters into union with them and through them experiences the world. Perhaps the closest historical parallel to this view is the Sānkhya philosophy with its dualism of *purusha*, the self as the changeless witness of nature, and *prakriti*, nature itself, the ever-changing psychophysical field.

Though more promising at first than the other two positions, this position too turns out to be flawed. Fundamental to the notion of selfhood is an inherent capacity for self-affirmation; as the autonomous subject of experience, self should be able to affirm its own being and identity to itself without need for external referents. Yet, the theorist is forced to admit, with the cessation of feeling, in the complete absence of feeling, the idea "I am this" could not be conceived. The assumed self can only identify itself as "this," e.g. "I am the experiencer of feeling," by reference to its psychophysical adjuncts. If these are removed, all points of reference for self to conceive its identity are removed and it then becomes a conceptual cipher. Again, the earlier statement should be recalled: without mentality-materiality together with consciousness there is no pathway for designation. When the referents are withdrawn, the designation "I am this" vanishes.

It is no use trying to dismiss the Buddha's rhetorical question as irrelevant on the ground that the clause about feeling ceasing "absolutely and utterly" is purely hypothetical and feeling can continue forever. For whether or not feeling does in fact ever cease absolutely is immaterial. The question clinches the point that the supposed self, being incapable of identifying itself without reference to its adjuncts, becomes totally dependent upon them for its identity — a strange predicament for an autonomous self to get into. Moreover, as the adjuncts it depends on for its identity are impermanent and conditioned, it becomes impossible to maintain the permanency and unconditionedness of self. But an impermanent and conditioned self is not a self at all, but a contradiction in terms. Thus once again, beginning with the theorist's own unstated premises, the assertion of self turns out to be inadmissible. Since all three positions are internally contradictory yet exhaustive of all possible views on self, the only escape route from the impasse is to reject the notion of selfhood altogether. Far from being a gesture of despair at the end of a blind alley, this relinquishing of all conceptions of self becomes a step through the door to liberation.

Thus the Buddha passes from exposing the flaws in consideration of self to demonstrating how a bhikkhu who abandons all these considerations attains arahatship (¶32). The commentary says that the bhikkhu is one who practises meditation on the foundations of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*). Since feeling was used to expound the views sustaining the round, we may presume that the bhikkhu strives to develop insight by practising the contemplation of feeling (*vedanānupassanā*). He discerns the rise and fall of feeling, sees all feelings as stamped with the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering ,and not-selfness, and so refrains from conceiving self in relation to feeling. Passing on to the contemplation of phenomena (*dhammānupassanā*), he extends his insight into the three characteristics from feeling to all the five aggregates. Whatever he contemplates from among the aggregates, he considers "This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self." When his insight comes to maturity he cuts off clinging and attains nibbāna here and now.

Such a bhikkhu, established in arahatship, does not affirm any of the four standard views on the status of a Tathāgata after death. A Tathāgata here is a perfected individual, one who has reached the final goal. In the philosophical circles of the Buddha's time all thinkers of standing were expected to define the condition of the Perfect One after death, and these pronouncements had to fit into the tetralemma. But the Buddha refused to endorse any of the four positions. The reason is not merely that he regarded them as idle speculations not conducive to spiritual edification

184/3

This is part of the reason, the best known part, but it is not the whole story. In rejecting the four views the Buddha says, in regard to each, that "it does not apply," and this statement implies that there is a philosophical consideration behind his silence, not merely a practical one. The most fundamental reason the Buddha rejects the entire tetralemma is that all four positions share a common error: the assumption that a Tathāgata exists as a self. Thus their formulations veer towards the speculative extremes. The view that a Tathāgata exists after death is eternalism; the view that he does not exist after death is annihilationism; the third and fourth positions are, respectively, a syncretism and agnosticism, grounded upon the same assumption. For the Enlightened One, who has seen the arising and passing away of the five aggregates, all ego-conceptions, conceptions of "mine," and underlying tendencies to conceit have been abandoned. Thus, with the uprooting of all conceivings, he does not even see a self-existent Tathāgata to die, let alone to be eternalized or annihilated after death.[1]

The same reason for maintaining a "noble silence" applies to the arahat bhikkhu described in the sutta. But here the reason is stated more obliquely: that he has directly known "the extent of designation and the extent of the pathway for designation," etc. In the light of the earlier discussion, the meaning of this passage should be clear. The liberated bhikkhu understands the distinction between the terms of reference — designations, language, and descriptions — and the "pathways" of reference, the referents comprised in the five aggregates. Understanding this distinction he cannot be led astray by such terms as "I," "mine," "self," "person," and "being." He no longer takes them as simple indicators of reality or ascribes to them a significance born from deluded cognition. He knows their proper range of application and can use them freely when needed without being trapped by them. So too with the designation "Tathāgata." The bhikkhu knows that "Tathāgata" is just a convenient term for referring to a conglomerate process of impermanent, empty phenomena which are suffering in the deepest sense. He understands that this process has arisen dependent upon conditions, that the conditions which brought it into being have been eradicated, and that with the breakup of the body the process will come to an end:

[1] See M 72; S. XLIV. 7, 8.

Friend Yamaka, if they were to question you thus: 'Friend Yamaka, with the breakup of the body, after death, what happens to the bhikkhu who is an arahat, a destroyer of the cankers?' — being thus questioned, what would you answer?"

"If, friend, they were to question me thus, I would answer: 'Friends, material form is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. It is suffering that has ceased and passed away. Feeling ..... perception ..... mental formations ..... consciousness is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. It is suffering that has ceased and passed away'" (S.XXII.85/iii.112).

The Liberated One

Having shown the arahat in a general way, without distinctions, in the final sections of the sutta (¶ 33-36) the Buddha introduces a division of the liberated one into two types: the *paññāvimutta* arahat, "the one liberated by wisdom," and the *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahat, "the one liberated in both ways." Both types achieve arahatship through wisdom, always the direct instrument for cutting off the ignorance that holds the defilements in place. For both the content of that wisdom is the same, the understanding of the four noble truths. For both the eradication of defilements is equally complete and final. What distinguishes them is their facility in serenity (*samatha*) — the extent to which they have gained mastery over the meditative attainments on the side of concentration (*samādhi*).

A clear sutta statement of the difference between the two types is found in the Kiṭāgiri Sutta (M.70/i.477-8). There the *ubhatobhāgavimutta* is described as a person who dwells "having suffused with the body" (*kāyena phusitvā*) the immaterial emancipations which are peaceful and transcend material form; and having seen with wisdom, his cankers are destroyed. The *paññāvimutta* does not dwell "having suffused with the body" the immaterial emancipations; but having seen with wisdom, for him too the cankers are destroyed. The distinguishing mark between them, then, is the "bodily suffusion" of the immaterial emancipations — the four immaterial attainments and the cessation of perception and feeling. The *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahat has this experience, the

paññāvimutta lacks it.[1] The commentary regards *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahatship as the consummation for the person originally spoken of as "not describing self," *paññāvimutta* arahatship as the consummation for the bhikkhu who does not consider self. The reason for this connection, presumably, is that the former passage may be read as alluding to the immaterial attainments, while the latter contains no indications of any attainments in serenity.

In the sutta itself the *paññāvimutta* arahat is described in terms of his understanding of the different realms of existence. This indirect presentation gives the Buddha the opportunity to sketch the topography of saṁsāra. Already, by explaining the conditions responsible for rebirth, he has depicted the generative structure of the round. Now, by showing the planes where rebirth can take place, he draws a picture of its cosmological terrain. The planes are divided into the seven stations for consciousness and the two bases; elsewhere these are collectively called the nine abodes of beings.[2] The round, the Buddha said earlier, turns only so long as consciousness "gains a footing" in mentality-materiality. The seven stations for consciousness provide the cosmic expanse of mentality-materiality where consciousness gains that footing, establishes itself, and comes to growth.[3]

The *paññāvimutta* arahat attains liberation by understanding each of the nine planes of existence from five angles: by way of its origin, passing away, satisfaction, unsatisfactoriness, and the escape from it.[4] The origin and passing away of the planes can be interpreted both as the conditioned origination and cessation of existence in those realms and as the momentary production and dissolution of their constituent phenomena. The former interpretation, taken as a basis for contemplation, leads to the comprehension of dependent arising, the latter to insight first into permanence and then into the other two characteristics, suffer and not-selfness. Contemplation of the remaining three aspe brings understanding of the four noble truths: "satisfactio implies craving, the truth of the origin of suffering, "unsatisfact ness" the truth of suffering, "escape" the truth of cessation toget with the path. When a bhikkhu understands the nine pla from these five angles, he abandons clinging and attains arahats as one liberated by wisdom. Since he has not gained mast over the meditative attainments (at least not the immaterial on it is clear he does not arrive at insight by contemplating t planes clairvoyantly. His knowledge is inductive rather t direct. By direct insight he can see that the phenomena inclu in his own experience have an origin, a passing away, satisfact unsatisfactoriness, and an escape. By induction he understa that these five aspects extend to all phenomena throughout planes.

Nothing is said in the sutta itself about the *paññāvimutta* arał abilities on the side of serenity. The commentary, filling in, expl that this type is fivefold: the "dry insight meditator" who att arahatship by the power of insight alone without the support fine material sphere jhāna, and those who reach arahatship basing themselves on one or another of the four fine mat sphere jhānas. The *paññāvimutta* arahat is thus certainly bereft of achievement in serenity; to the contray, he can c serenity quite far. However, not being an obtainer of the e emancipations, unable to dwell "having suffused these with body," he lacks the power of eminent concentration.

The *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahat, in contrast, is expressly descr by way of his mastery over the eight emancipations. The en cipations (¶ 35) include the nine successive attainments rea by the power of concentration: the four jhānas, the four immat attainments, and the cessation of perception and feeling. four jhānas are not mentioned among the emancipations u their own name, but are included by the first three items in set. The cessation of perception and feeling requires not concentration but also insight; it can be attained only by returners and arahats who have already mastered the immat attainments. On the basis of the commentarial discussion

1 The commentary defines the two types by statements from the *Puggalapaññatti* (of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka). These statements are identical with the passage from the Kiṭāgiri Sutta except that they explain the distinction with reference to the eight emancipations collectively rather than to the immaterial emancipations alone. In specifying the latter the sutta definition is more lucid.

2 For a diagrammatic representation, see Table 2.

3 The commentary points out that consciousness is also present in the base of neither perception nor non-perception, but in such subtle form that the base cannot be classified among the seven stations. In the four immaterial planes there is no materiality, but only consciousness and mentality.

4 *Samudaya, atthaṅgama, assāda, ādīnava, nissaraṇa.*

that for a meritative attainment to qualify as an emancip- is not enough merely that it be entered and dwelt in; after being attained, it has to be developed to such a of eminence that it "thoroughly releases" the mind from ites opposed to it.

commentaries explain the word *ubhatobhāgavimutta* as ng both liberated *through* two portions and liberated *from* rtions. Through his mastery over the immaterial attain- this type of arahat is liberated from the material body, h his attainment of the path of arahatship he is liberated he mental body. This twofold liberation of the *ubhato- mutta* arahat should not be confused (as it sometimes is) the two liberations — "liberation of mind" (*cetovimutti*) iberation by wisdom" (*paññāvimutta*) — mentioned in ¶ 36. two kinds of liberation are used to describe arahatship in l and pertain to all arahats (see M.i/35-36); they even in a passage describing a type of arahat who does not the eight emancipations (A.IV.87/ii.87). "Liberation of here signifies the release of the mind from lust that takes hrough the arahat's prior development of concentration, tion by wisdom" the release from ignorance that takes hrough his development of wisdom (A.II.iii.10/i.61). In mmentaries the former is taken to denote the concentration in the arahat's fruition attainment, the latter to denote sdom faculty.

ıe *ubhatobhāgavimutta* arahat is described as one who obtains ht emancipations, the question may be raised how far his olishment in this area must go to merit the title "liberated ı ways." The Kīṭāgiri Sutta cited above makes it plain ıe immaterial emancipations are necessary. But need he all these without omission? The exegetical texts answer negative. The commentary says that the "one liberated ı ways" is fivefold by way of those who attain arahatship nerging from one or another of the four immaterial attain- and the one who attains after emerging from cessation. ıbcommentary explains that if one obtains even a single :rial attainment one can be called a gainer of the eight pations and thus be liberated in both ways. But nothing ın that will do. The exegetical texts, arguing down an unorthodox opinion that the fourth jhāna is sufficient, emphasize that only the immaterial attainments give the complete experien- tial liberation from material form needed to qualify for the title.

Though it is clear from this that the "one liberated in both ways" admits of grades, in the Mahānidāna Sutta the Buddha explains this type by way of the highest grade. He shows the liberated one at the height of his powers as a bhikkhu who enjoys complete proficiency in all eight emancipations and who, through the destruction of the cankers, dwells in the fruition of attainment of arahatship. By his twofold liberation he is the perfect living embodiment of the ending of the round. Since he can ascend at will through all the emancipations to enter and dwell in the ces- sation of perception and feeling, he is able to realize in this very life freedom from the vortex of consciousness and mentality- materiality. And since, with the attainment of arahatship, he has abolished all defilements, he is assured that with the end of his bodily existence the vortex will never turn for him again. Thence the Buddha concludes the "Great Discourse on Causation" with words that both extol the doubly liberated arahat for his own achievement and commend him as a model for others: "There is no other liberation in both ways higher or more sublime than this one."

The Buddhist Teaching of Dependent Co-Arising

"Wonderful, lord, marvelous, lord, is the depth of this causal law and how deep it appears. And yet I reckon it as ever so plain." "Say not so, Ananda, say not so! Deep indeed is this causal law, and deep indeed it appears. It is through not knowing, not understanding, not penetrating, that doctrine, that this generation has become entangled like a ball of string, and covered with blight, like unto munja grass and rushes, unable to overpass the doom of the waste, the woeful way, the downfall, the constant faring on."

Two and a half millenia ago Gotama the Buddha put forth the doctrine of causality called *paṭicca samuppāda*, or dependent co-arising. It is basic to the Buddhist view of life. Indeed in no other religion we know is a teaching of causation accorded so explicit and fundamental a role. In this vision of reality, the existence of both self and world are seen in terms of mutually conditioning psycho-physical events, which arise and pass away, interdependently. It is so comparable to the causal paradigm emerging in our own era that it can appear to us like an ancient, forgotten city, overgrown by jungle and awaiting rediscovery and restoration. Indeed the Buddha, in speaking of his initial vision of *paṭicca samuppāda*, likened it to such a city:

> There arose in me vision, knowledge arose, insight arose, wisdom arose, light arose. Just as if, brethren, a man faring through the forest, through the great wood, should see an ancient path, an ancient road traversed by men of former days. And he were to go along it, and going along it he should see an ancient city, an ancient prince's domain, wherein dwelt

men of former days, having gardens, groves, pools, foundations of walls, a goodly spot. And that man, brethren, should bring word to the prince or to the prince's minister: "Pardon, Lord, know this . . . I have seen an ancient city, an ancient prince's domain, wherein dwelt men of former days, having gardens, groves, pools, foundations of walls, a goodly spot. Lord, restore that city." And, brethren, the prince or his minister should restore that city. That city should hereafter become prosperous and flourishing, populous, teeming with folk, grown, and thriven.[2]

The Central Role of the Causal Doctrine in the Dharma

The Pali term *paṭicca samuppāda* (Sanskrit: *pratitya samutpada*) denotes the doctrine of causal process which the Buddha taught. In the Dharma[3] (the teachings of the Buddha and the law of reality which they convey), its chief emphasis is soteriological: It shows how suffering arises and how liberation from suffering can be won. As such this doctrine serves not only as explanation but as means for liberation: Its very realization, existentially and intuitively, is presented as transforming consciousness. Revealing itself as the fundamental character of reality, of the way things are, *paṭicca samuppāda* colors the Buddhist apprehension of all phenomena. It underlies the Buddhist vision of the interdependence of life, and is basic to its understanding of the plight and the promise that are intrinsic to the human condition. As Louis de la Vallée Poussin, the French Buddhologist, put it,

> Aucune théorie ne parait plus essentielle au bouddhisme que celle de la 'production conditionée' . . . aucune n'est plus souvent mentionée ou supposée dans les écrits canoniques, aucune ne peut être plus justement définie comme le *crédo* du bouddhisme.
>
> (No theory appears more essential to Buddhisim than that of 'conditioned production' . . . none is more frequently mentioned or assumed in the canonical texts, none can be more justifiably defined as the *credo* of Buddhism.)[4]

In scriptural accounts of the enlightenment, *paṭicca samuppāda* is the intellectual and expressible content of the insight to which Gotama awakened, the realization by which he became the Buddha.

After years of yogic training, Gotama found the religious teachings of his time inadequate to reveal and resolve the canker at the core of human experience. When he sat under the *bodhi* tree to plumb for himself the root causes of human suffering, it was this vision of dependent co-arising which swept upon him. As such, *paṭicca samuppāda* is that abiding truth about reality which Buddhas, as they appear in the world, rediscover and make manifest.[5] Other religious teachers can witness to righteousness and the virtues of loving kindness and self-restraint, but only Buddhas, according to scripture, have won that causal vision and give that causal teaching by which such virtues are seen as integral to the nature of reality.

"Deep, delicate and subtle," it is hard to understand, difficult to see, and "beyond logic"[6]; yet when glimpsed and intuitively grasped, it is an integral component to enlightenment—as the stories not only of Gotama, but also of his first convert Kondañña and his eminent disciple Śariputra indicate.[7] The doctrine of *paṭicca samuppāda* is so central as to be, in words attributed to the Buddha, equated with the Dharma itself and set forth as prerequisite to the attainment of *nirvāna* (Pali: *nibbāna*).[8]

Its understanding represents wisdom (*paññā*) and constitutes 'right views', the first component of the Buddha's Eightfold Path.[9] *Paṭicca samuppāda* also serves as ground for morality. It is on this basis, as well as that of empirical evidence, that the Buddha attacked other contrasting causal views, for he saw these as providing neither rationale nor motivation for moral action.[10]

This doctrine, then, arose out of religious and ethical concerns, as the fruit of a quest for emancipation. It came out of confrontation with the brute fact of human suffering and the raw issue of the validity of moral action. To the Buddha and his followers this insight was integral to a transformation whose occurrence and promise changed the face of life. The scriptures make clear that a true, efficacious perception of *paṭicca samuppāda* entails the overhauling of one's most ingrained assumptions and cannot be won without the risks of existential commitment and meditative introspection:

> By him who knows not, who sees not as it really is (the causal uprising and ceasing) . . . training must be done . . . practice must be done . . . exertion must be made . . . there must be no turning back . . . there must be energy . . . there must be mindfulness . . . there must be earnestness.[11]

Such words remind us of the limits of scholarship. No textual exegesis or conceptual elaboration can substitute for the training and psychological investment considered requisite for an understanding of *paṭicca samuppāda*. We need, therefore, to be mindful that all conceptual treatments of dependent co-arising are by their nature limited and inadequate.

In this study I will examine *paṭicca samuppāda* on the basis of its earliest presentations in the *vinaya* and *suttas* (also known as *nikāyas*) of the Pali Canon.[12] I will show that this vision of reality goes beyond a linear view of causality to embrace a reciprocal or mutual relation between cause and effect. Later, in examining the implications of mutual causality, I will show how *paṭicca samuppāda* is fundamental to the Buddha's teachings about the character of the self, its capacity to know and act, and its relation to body, nature, and society. In doing so I will bring this causal doctrine into dialogue with general systems theory, so that together these two perspectives can enrich our understanding of mutual causality.

Paṭicca samuppāda presents a contrast with pre- and non-Buddhist Indian views of causality as radical as general systems theory's departure from the unidirectional causal constructs that have predominated in Western thought. To appreciate the distinctiveness of dependent co-arising within its historical and cultural context, let us look at the causal notions that were current in India in the sixth century B.C.E., at the time the Buddha began to teach.

Linear Causality in Pre-Buddhist India

The Buddhist view of causality represented a sharp divergence from other causal views current in ancient India and was articulated and defended in opposition to them. These included both the Vedic view and its non-Vedic alternatives. Together these constitute the contrasting philosophic backdrop against which *paṭicca samuppāda* was presented.

In discussing these non-Buddhist views of causality, I am dealing with identifiable and articulated philosophical perspectives rather than with the causal implications of myth and ritual. Within the philosophic context the Buddha Dharma represents a clear and radical departure from early Indian teachings. If this frame of reference were broadened to include other forms of religious expression, the divergence represented by the Buddhist causal view would not appear quite so radical. The ideas, stories and imagery surrounding the central Vedic ritual of the sacrifice, and especially the sacred role of fire, can suggest a cosmic vision where order and power are sustained in their operation by the reciprocal response of the life forms they occasion. The fire sacrifice nourishes, feeds back to, the gods that which their existence makes possible, and which they in turn require for their own continuity and efficacy.

An examination of such mutual causal implications discernible in Indian myth and ritual would necessitate a separate work. Here the focus is on the philosophic domain, where views of causality were explicitly expressed. I would note, however, that reciprocal causality appears to be perceived more readily by the mythic than the philosophic mentality. For this causal notion yields apparent paradoxes—cause turns into effect; the doer, by the doing, is done unto; hunter becomes prey. Implicit in mythic causality is the creative interplay of opposites. The founder of general systems theory attested to this acknowledging the debt he owed Nicholas of Cusa.[13] Because the mythic apprehension of reality, by virtue of its roots and forms, is less subject to linear causal assumptions, it has been able to reconcile polarities with greater ease than has rational discourse.[14] From this standpoint the Buddha's teaching does indeed represent a radical departure from the thought of his era, for it articulates mutual causality as a conscious and explicit philosophic view.

The Vedic philosophic view of causality, as intimated in the Rig Veda and elaborated by Upaniṣadic and Sāṃkhyan thinkers, is unidirectional. In the notions of *svadhā* (own power) and *satkāryavāda* (self-causation) the effect pre-exists in the cause. The effect represents potency inherent in the cause and unfolds and evolves from it sequentially, as curds from milk, rain from clouds. As such, effects and transformations represent new guises of the old. The logic of this view stems from the Vedic equation of the real with the immutable, an absolute aloof from change—a presupposition which characterizes the mainstream of subsequent Hindu thought.

This presupposition poses the problem of how to relate the true and the changeless to the existential experience of change. It renders questionable the reality of transformation. The appearance of novelty was interpreted either as the ripening of a previously existing condition (*pariṇāmavāda*) or as an outright illusion (*vivartavāda*). In either case, change, the realm of *māyā*, is seen as that which obscures the real and deludes the mind. The postulation of an absolute essence as the ground of phenomenal reality leads also to a distinction between substance and attribute. Change comes to

be seen as the domain of properties superimposed on the underlying essence. The properties (*guṇas*) thus distinguished were seen as real by the Sāṃkhyans, as illusory by the Upaniṣadic and Vedantic thinkers, and by *both* as binding and perilous to the spirit.

Where an absolute is posited as the abode of pure being, it is also the locus of power and agency. This is true of Brahman. Although no world-creator role is accorded it, it is the source and progenitor of *māyā*. This is also the case in Sāṃkhyan philosophy. There, although *puruṣa* (cosmic Person) and *prakṛti* (nature) are dualistically conceived and accorded equal reality, the process of phenomenal change and evolution requires the presence of the changeless, pure spirit. Change, emanating from or impelled by an unalterable agent, is unidirectional. And this became, in non-Buddhist India as it did in the West, the predominant model for causality.

Yoga may appear on the surface to challenge this linearity. It can appear to represent a reverse movement from effect to cause. The yogi works back upstream against the form-spawning current of phenomenality; the process is one of involution in contrast to evolution. Even so, causation as production of change can be seen as remaining unidirectional. For in this yogic movement back from product to producer, from phenomenality to essence, from the Many to the One, the cause is not in turn modified by the effect. Change is undone, or seen through, rather than continuing to be operative.

In the intellectual ferment that characterized sixth century B.C.E. India, other views of causality contended as well. In opposition to doctrines which posited the causal primacy of *ātman*, Brahman or *puruṣa*, these alternative views took two main directions: materialist determinism, and accidentalism, or acausalism.

Among the materialists, the Cārvākas and Lokāyatas, an initial spiritual, transcendent cause was denied and events made explicable solely in terms of the inherent properties of matter (*svabhāva*, or "own nature").[15] Some materialists, in their rejection of a psychic component to experience, even denied any validity to inference. The reality they presented, however, instead of appearing chaotic and random, adhered to a strict determinism, the remorseless juggernaut of material inevitability. Most deterministic of all were the Ājīvakas, whose concept of fate (*niyati*) and material view of *karma* (action and the results of actions) allowed scope for neither will nor chance (*yadṛccha*).[16] These views, while deterministic, were also called *ahetuvāda* (non-causal way), probably because no causal role was assigned to mind or spirit.

At the other extreme from such determinism stood the views accorded to the *yadṛcchavādins* (accidentalists).[17] Also known by the Buddhists as *adhicca-samuppanikā* (fortuitous-originists), these thinkers held that "the soul and the world arise without a cause."[18] A further category, probably overlapping both views, included those whom the Buddhists referred to as *ucchedavādins* (annihilationists). This view, according to the *Brahamjāla Sutta*, accepted the premise of a soul, but saw it as finite and assumed, in opposition to the eternalism of Vedic thought, a radical discontinuity in the nature of reality.[19]

The early Buddhists sometimes categorized these contrasting causal visions in a fourfold fashion: as *sayam-katam* (self-caused), as *param-katam* (externally, or other- caused), as both, and as neither.[20] To the category of self-causation they assigned the *satkāryavādins* of Upaniṣadic and Sāṃkhyan persuasion, with their belief in an external and immutable essence. This Vedic view they also characterized as eternalist. By external causation, they refer to determinacy external to human will and present choice. In this category figured a variety of theories, including the materialist determinists as well as those adhering to belief in a creator God.[21] The third category, causation as both internal and external, probably represented, as Kalupahana suggests, the position of the Jainas.[22] These, in an eclectic mix, sought to accommodate change and relativity while maintaining belief in an eternal soul (*jīva*) and a deterministic view of *karma*. The fourth category of neither internal nor external causation reflects the position of the accidentalists.

The early Buddhists also used other terms and categorical divisions to classify the causal views with which they took issue. Since the nature of causality directly affected the character of *karma*, a pervasive concept of the time, the degree to which present action was predetermined was an urgent and lively issue. Consequently, alternate theories were categorized not only in terms of agency, but also in terms of determinism and responsibility. Such a classification of the views which the Buddhists rejected is: the karmic determinist or *pubbekataheto* ("due to what one did in the past"), the theistic determinist or *issaranimmanāheto* ("due to creation by God"), and the indeterminist or *ahetu-appaccayā* ("without cause or reason").[23]

All these contending non-Buddhist ideas of causality, whatever the differing schemas according to which they were ordered and labeled, are essentially linear. In the Vedic view, change, whether real or illusory, is seen as issuing from or occasioned by an eternal changeless substance. In the non-Vedic arguments, such

causation is either denied outright or transformed into a radical determinism. Whether affirmed or attacked, causality is perceived as unidirectional.

Comparison with Western Linear Views

The early Indian debate about causality, which formed the philosophic backdrop against which the Buddha propounded a radically different causal vision, bears a schematic similarity to that of the West. Tracing these parallels will help us to see more clearly the distinctiveness of the Buddha's teaching from the causal assumptions to which we are accustomed in our own society.

Like the dominant Vedic notions of *svadhā* and *satkāryavāda*, based on the assumption of an absolute essence and the equation of reality with changelessness, the Greek postulation of permanent substance (with Parmenides) and then an Unmoved Mover (with Aristotle) led to a comparable unidirectionality of causal view. A major difference in the dominant Western view stems from its restriction, since the Renaissance, to efficient causation. With the rise of modern science, the other forms of causation which Aristotle had posited fell away as irrelevant or obstructive to the spirit of inquiry. Final and formal causes were rejected as beyond empirical verification, while material cause was taken for granted as the ground of all research.[24] By contrast, *svadhā* and *satkāryavāda* go beyond efficient causation to partake of the nature of formal and material cause. While efficient causation is essentially external, the Vedic notion refers primarily to the self-evolution of the primal cause. Yet the predominant Eastern and Western mainstream views are comparable to the extent that they originated in presuppositions of a prime cause, an unalterable absolute. From this derive their linearity and their distinction between substance and attribute.

In the West as in ancient India, reactions against the dominant causal view moved in two opposing directions. There were those who denied any objective causality at all; perceiving that the mainstream view ultimately rested on the assumption of a prime mover, they rejected that assumption as an unsubstantiated inference, and so rejected both causality and inference as well. And, on the other hand, there were those who, accepting causality, restricted its operation to the purely physical plane.

Among the former we find such thinkers as Locke and Hume, whose radical empiricism reduced causality to a subjective category, the perception of constant conjunction. Observed reality became in their eyes a temporal succession of events to which objective production could not be legitimately attributed. This view of causality as mere sequence led to a modern acausalism which substitutes description for explanation and which is comparable to the accidentalists of the Buddha's time.[25] Twentieth century scientific observations seemed to confirm the accidentalist or indeterminate view. Because subatomic particles do not follow trajectories comprehensible in terms of linear, efficient causation, reality itself appeared random.

The other and opposite reaction to the dominant linear model of causation involved a shift to material determinism. To many in both ancient India and the modern West, the rejection of a first cause, unconditioned and supraphysical, entailed wholesale rejection of the causal efficacy of mind. Like the Ajivikas of the Buddha's era, many modern determinists have come to see causality as material process alone. The most clearly articulated view of this kind is the Marxist, which explicitly perceives change as rooted in physical conditions. But belief in the determining role of the material and measurable, the assumption that it is more real than the mental, dominates a large portion of the non-Marxist world as well.

Since the rise of modern science, determinacy had become identified with efficient causation, one thing shaping or pushing another thing. This made mainstream Western causality susceptible to materialism and useful as a defender of it. In contrast, the Vedic view had maintained its view of the causal supremacy of spirit, and the materialists of the Buddha's time stood outside of and in contrast to it.

In both the West and ancient India, presuppositions characteristic of the predominant view—that is, unidirectionality and the dichotomy between substance and attribute—tended to be assumed by those who reacted against it. In each culture, perception and critique of these presuppositions was necessary for a breakthrough to a radically new causal vision.

In the modern West such a critique has accelerated in the last generation. Not only do scientists find linear, one-way causality inadequate as a conceptual tool for understanding complex systems, they also challenge its philosophic and ontological implications. A primary problem is that of novelty, for they see in the traditional view an implicit denial of the qualitatively new. Mario Bunge criticizes linear causality for presenting a perspective on reality in which "only old things can come out of change." According to the linear view, he says, effects essentially pre-exist in their causes; they are

passive and incapable of adding "something of their own" to the causal bond. "[Such] processes can give rise to objects new in number or new in some quantitative respects, not however new in *kind*."[26]

In ancient India the Buddhists provided such a critique of traditional causal presuppositions, and on similar grounds. The Buddha also perceived that the causal views of his time disallowed novelty and meaningful change, but he expressed his judgment in more existential and ethical terms. He opposed these causal views, he said, because they provided "neither desire to do, nor effort to do, nor necessity to do this deed or abstain from that deed. So then, the necessity for action or inaction [is] not found to exist in truth or verity."[27]

Scriptural Presentations of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

A concise and literal English rendering of this Pali term is difficult. *Uppāda*, the substantive form of the verb *uppajjati*, means "arising"; *sam-uppāda*, "arising together." *Paṭicca*, as the gerund of *pacceti* (*pati* + *i*, to "come back to" or "fall back on"), is used to denote "grounded on" or "on account of." Literally, then, the compound would mean "on account of arising together," or, since it is used as a substantive, "the being-on-account-of-arising-together." Buddhaghosa defines *paṭicca samuppāda* as "that according to which co-ordinate phenomena are produced mutually."[28] English translations of the scriptures most frequently render it as "dependent co-arising," "dependent co-origination," "conditioned genesis," or "conditioned co-production." Another Pali compound used in the canonical texts to refer to the Buddha's view of causality is *idappaccayatā*, literally "this-conditionality." Sometimes translated as "the relatedness of this to that" and as "relativity," it is used synonymously with *paṭicca-samuppāda*.

The meaning of *paṭicca samuppāda* cannot be apprehended aside from the doctrine of *anicca*, impermanence. The first of the three characteristics (*ti-lakkhana*) of existence, it is usually treated as the basis for the other two, *dukkha* (suffering) and *anattā* (no self). Although masked by the appearance of continuity, impermanence is real and pervasive, as is learned in the meditation which the Buddha taught.[29] There in *Satipaṭṭhāna* or mindfulness practice, we perceive that change, the ceaseless arising and passing of events, constitutes our existence, and that there is nothing in our experience or self that is aloof from change. All that we perceive and feel and think is *anicca*. No factor external to change, no absolute that is

not definitive of process itself, secures our existence. Taking a small piece of cow dung in his hand, the Buddha said, "Bhikkhus, if even that much of permanent, everlasting, eternal individual selfhood (*attabhava*), not inseparable from the idea of change, could be found, then this living of the holy life could not be taught by me".[30]

Within this realm of flux the causal orderliness which the Buddha taught inheres. No immutable essence is posited from which *paṭicca samuppāda*, as a regulative principle, emanates. Rather it is the pattern of change itself. As such, it represents a dual assertion—of change *and* order, or order within change. In the linear view of causality, order requires permanence, a static basis impermeable to change. But here order and impermanence go hand in hand.

The dual perception of impermanence and order suffices to demonstrate the distance between the Buddha's causal teachings and other causal concepts of his time. This can be seen succinctly and schematically in a dialogue with the disciple Kassapa.[31] He questions the Buddha on the origin of suffering, using the fourfold form, or tetralemma, that will become characteristic of Buddhist dialectics (*A;* not *A;* both *A* and not-*A;* neither *A* nor not-*A*). This dialogue is essentially repeated as having occurred with others, attesting to its significance. With the wanderer Timbaruka, for example, the question is not the cause of suffering but the cause of pleasure and pain.

Here, to Kassapa's question, "Is suffering wrought by oneself?" the Buddha answers no, for that would imply, he explains, the eternalist theory: a changeless self. "What then, Master Gotama, is one's suffering wrought by another?" The Buddha again says no;[32] that question assumes one is impotent in a predetermined universe. Similarly he denied, in the third query, that suffering is caused (made) both externally and internally. All three of these questions presuppose (the verb used is "wrought" or "made," not "conditioned") that causality requires an enduring substance which as agent produces another—a view undercut by the perception of *anicca* and *anattā*.

The fourth and last question offers the only alternative that Kassapa sees: acausality. "Has suffering, wrought neither by myself nor another, befallen me by chance?" Again the Buddha's negative reply. In his view the denial of permanence and substance, represented by *anicca* and *anattā*, does not mean the rule of chance. Kassapa, confused, wonders whether the Buddha accords reality to the concept they are discussing. "The Master Gotama neither knows nor sees suffering." "Nay, Kassapa, I am not one who knows not

193/3

suffering nor sees it. I am one that knows suffering, Kassapa, I am one that sees it." And he then teaches the interdependence of conditions, which he perceived in his enlightenment.

In this teaching he shows how factors of existence, such as ignorance, sense perception, feelings, craving, condition each other to produce suffering and how, by virtue of that conditionality, suffering in turn can be undone. This conditionality represents the order within the flow of existence. According to the chronology the scriptures present, this interrelated series of psycho-physical factors is set forth as the first perception and enunciation of *paṭicca samuppāda*. It features in accounts of the Buddha's enlightenment and represents the cognitive content of his insight. It is likely that this formulation by a series of conditioned factors is a later, formalized illustration of *paṭicca samuppāda*, which became identified with the insight itself as the teachings were passed down.[33]

That event, as described, begins in confrontation with suffering, as does the later formulation of the Four Noble Truths. Facing the dimensions of pain, respecting its reality, the Buddha seeks to trace its arising: "What now being present, is decaying and death also present; what conditions decaying and dying?"[34] Birth is the condition of decay and dying. The question is repeated for birth, and with each successive answer it is asked again. "What now being present, is craving also present? What conditions craving?" and "feeling"? and "contact"? on back to *nāmarūpa* (name and form) and *viññāna* (consciousness or cognition) itself. In what is considered the oldest account, these factors amount to ten; most other passages add the conditioning factors of *saṅkhārā* (volitional formations) and *avijjā* (ignorance) to make a total of twelve.

The conditional factors enumerated in this series came to be known as *nidānas*. Sometimes translated as "cause," the term *nidāna* (stemming from *ni* + *dā*, to bind or fetter) denotes basis, constraint, or occasion. It came to be used synonymously with *paccaya*, the relational term whose adverbial form is used in the series and translated as "conditioned by." In some passages, such as the *Dvayātānupassana sutta*, the equivalent term for these factors is *upadhi*. Appearing elsewhere in scriptures to denote passion and limitation, *upadhi*, like *paccayā*, literally means "support" or that "which is placed under."

The serial enumeration of these *nidānas*, *upadhis*, or *paccayas* appears in a variety of forms. Some exclude *saṅkhārā* and *avijjā*; some change the order; and some include factors of pleasure and bliss. The predominant form which became standard, is twelvefold as

follows.[35] Connecting each is the term *paccayā* in the ablative, as in *avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā*, "conditioned by ignorance, the formations."

avijjā (ignorance)
saṅkhārā (volitional, or karmic formations)
viññāna (consciousness or cognition)
nāmarūpa (name and form, or the psycho-physical entity)
saḷāyatana (the sixfold senses)
phassa (contact)
vedanā (feeling)
taṇhā or *tṛṣna* (craving)
upādāna (grasping)
bhava (becoming)
jāti (birth)
jarāmaraṇa (decay and death)

While each link arises *paccayā*, by means of or conditioned by the preceding one, a variation occurs in the third and fourth *nidānas*. There a number of texts circle back, and after stating that *nāmarūpa* is conditioned by *viññāna*, reinsert the latter as conditioned in turn by *nāmarūpa*.

So presented, with *paccayā*, the series represents *dukkha-khandassa samudaya*, the "arising of this heap of suffering." Since suffering is seen as conditioned, it can be undone as is affirmed by the third Noble Truth. If conditioned by *A*, *B* arises, then with the cessation of A, B ceases. The series then is recited in the form of *avijjā-nirodhā saṅkhārā nirodho*. Here the term *nirodhā*, "*with the ceasing of*", replaces *paccayā* is repeated in the nominative form to show that this entails the cessation of the next factor. In this form the series represents *dukkha-khandassa nirodha* or the "ceasing of this heap of suffering." Redactors often substituted these two forms of the *nidāna* series for the second and third Noble Truths.

The series, whether *samudaya* or *nirodhā*, is also presented both in forward order (from that which conditions to that which is conditioned) and reverse order. These directions are termed *anuloma* and *paṭiloma*, with and against the grain.

The variations in the number and kind of causal factors indicate that the conditional relationship of these causal factors is significant, not the separate factors themselves. Emphasis is on the transiency and relationality which characterize them and which provide scope for meaningful change. The factors which we experience as basic to life and which give rise to our pain condition each other. All are linked, none are permanent, hence the possibility of release.

This emphasis can be discerned from the outset in the account of the Buddha's enlightenment right after he had traced the factors conditional to suffering.

> Coming to be, coming to be! . . . Ceasing to be, ceasing to be! At that thought, brethren, there arose . . . a vision of things not before called to mind, and knowledge arose, light arose. . . . Such is form, such is the coming to be of form, such is its passing away. . . . Such is cognition, such is its coming to be, such is its passing away. And [he abided] in the discernment of the arising and passing away.[36]

The nonsubstantial character of reality which it affirms makes this teaching hard to convey. It goes against the grain of both our sensory experience and our desire for security. Recognizing this, the Buddha was tempted not to teach.

> I have penetrated this truth, deep, hard to perceive, hard to understand, calm, sublime, beyond logic, subtle, intelligible only to the wise. But this is a race devoting itself to the things to which it clings. . . . And for such a race this were a matter hard to perceive, to wit, that this is conditioned by that (*ida paccayatā paṭicca samuppādo*). . . . And if I were to teach the truth, and other men did not acknowledge it to me, that would be wearisome to me, that would be hurtful to me. . . . This that through many toils I've won—enough! Why should I make it known?[37]

But although he pondered thus, his "heart inclining to be averse from exertion," he remembered the suffering and the need of beings. According to the legend it was the god Brahma who reminded him: "[T]here are those perishing from not hearing the truth; they will come to be knowers of the truth . . . there are those who will understand".[38] Thereupon, in compassion, the Buddha set forth to teach.

When he found his former companions and delivered his first teachings, the order and emphasis accorded them in the texts is significant. Note that of the elements of his sermon it is *paṭicca samuppāda* that is identified as unique to the Buddha. First he "discoursed in due order,"

> that is to say, he gave them illustrative talk on generosity, on right conduct, on heaven, on the danger, the vanity and the defilement of lusts, on the advantages of renunciation. When the Exalted One saw that they had become prepared, softened, unprejudiced, upraised and believing in heart, then he proclaimed that Truth which the Buddhas alone have won; that is to say, the doctrine of Sorrow, of its origin, of its cessation, and the Path.[38]

Here a key phrase is employed, "whatsoever is subject to the condition of origination is subject also to the condition of cessation." At this point his first convert Kondañña is enlightened. "Truly Kondañña has perceived it!" said the Buddha.[40]

The teachings of *paṭicca samuppāda* in the form of the *nidāna* series occurs chiefly in the accounts of the Buddha's enlightenment and in passages where he distinguishes the Dharma from other views of karma and determinacy. In these early texts the series is not presented as a portrayal of rebirth or a sequence of lives. That interpretation, as I detail in the next chapter, arose later with the Abhidharma, or Buddhist scholastic thought. Nor is the series in the *suttas* and *vinaya* imaged in circular form. Only in later descriptions and iconography is it applied to the symbol of the wheel. In the *cakra* (wheel), which has featured in Indian culture since the time of the chariot-driving Aryans, *avijjā* and *jarāmaraṇa* meet in contiguity, the circle thus formed conveying the endlessness and beginninglessness of causal interaction. Then, as portrayed in Mahayanist art, this causal series becomes the wheel of life itself held in the claws of Yama, god of death.[41]

In addition to the interdependent chain of *nidānas* and to the second and third Noble Truths, which it represents and sometimes replaces, *paṭicca samuppāda* receives in the early texts another frequent and much briefer formulation. It consists of a four-part formula that sometimes stands alone and sometimes accompanies the *nidāna* series, either preceding or following it.

> imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti
> imassupādā idaṃ uppajjati
> imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti
> imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjati.

(This being, that becomes; from the arising of this, that arises; this not being, that becomes not; from the ceasing of this, that ceases.)[42]

Frequently this short formula appears in the texts in conjunction with the denial that anything ever exists eternally or perishes absolutely. "This" (*idaṃ*) arises and passes away in interdependency

with other similarly transient phenomena; its manifestation is not related to any immutable essence or entity, nor is it conditional on anything external to change. The conditionality, *ida-paccayatā*, to which this and other expressions of *paṭicca samuppāda* witness, is that of a universe in process where all is interrelated and mutually affecting.

No mention is made of *dukkha* here, nor is this formulation tied in the texts to explanations of suffering. Rather it presents, simply and baldly, the interdependence of phenomena which the Buddha perceived. *Paṭicca samuppāda* is frequently assumed to consist in an explanation of suffering alone. But that does not define or delineate the content of the insight that occurred in the enlightenment. It was not *dukkha* that the Buddha beheld beneath the *bodhi* tree—that fact he already knew, and it impelled his search. It was *samudaya* and *nirodhā*, the conditioned arising and ceasing, that broke upon him there. Nor did this relation of arising and passing away come to be presented exclusively in terms of suffering. T. W. Rhys Davids concluded that of all the ninety-three suttas dealing with *paṭicca samuppāda* in the *Saṃyutta Nikaya*, only one-sixth have *dukkha* as their subject. A number of others employ it to exhort against craving; but by far the largest proportion, fifty-six, present *paṭicca samuppāda* as the causal relation between all phenomena and the principle which all followers must master.[43]

This chapter has focused on those portions of the Dharma that are seen as explicit formulations of *paṭicca samuppāda*. Such a focus is inadequate to convey the pervasive presence of this concept of causality in the teachings of the Buddha. It imbued all his utterances, shaped the metaphors and parables he employed, and underlay, as we shall show, the views of personhood, of karma and social responsibility which he taught. Dependent co-arising is implicit throughout. In Part Three of this book many of these less explicit allusions to *paṭicca samuppāda* will be brought out.

Notes

1. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.91.

2. *Ibid.*, II.105.

3. Because popular English usage today has adopted the word *dharma* in this Sanskrit form, I will use that instead of the Pali form (*dhamma*). For the same reason, I will use *karma* instead of the Pali *kamma*.

4. Poussin, *Théorie des Douze Causes*, p. v. My translation.

5. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.25.

6. *Dīgha Nikāya*, II.36.

7. *Vinaya*, Mahavagga I.1,39.

8. *Majjhima Nikāya*, II.32; *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.124.

9. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.15.

10. *Anguttara Nikāya*, I.174.

11. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.131,2.

12. The *suttas* (Sanskrit: *sutras*) or the recorded discourses attributed to the Buddha, and the *vinaya* or books of monastic discipline, are the first two and the oldest of the three "baskets" of the Pali canonical scriptures.

13. von Bertalanffy, *Perspectives on General Systems Theory*, p. 53ff. By the same token, Stewart Brand sees systems-cybernetics as presenting "wholesome paradoxes that (thank God) undermine human conscious purpose" (*II Cybernetic Frontiers*, inside front cover).

14. Dudley, "Mircea Eliade as Anti-Historian," p. 356.

15. Kalupahana, *Causality*, 29–31.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

17. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*. pp. 444–45.

18. *Dīgha Nikāya*, I.28.

19. *Ibid.*, I.34.

20. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.18.

21. Kalupahana, *Causality*, p. 5.

22. *Ibid.*, Chapter II.

23. *Anguttara Nikāya*, I.173.

24. Bunge, *Causality*, 32–33.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 333.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 4.

27. *Anguttara Nikāya*, I.174.

28. Kalupahana, *Causality*, 54, 202.

29. *Dīgha Nikāya*, II.290.

30. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, III.144.

31. *Ibid.*, II.18.

32. The Buddha's negative replies in these passages is literally *ma hevaṃ*, which is usually translated "not so" or "not so, verily." Actually, the form suggests prohibition rather than denial, as in "do not say so." Thus emphasis is on the wrongness of question and the kind of answer it invites—"don't put it that way"—rather than on its negation. (Kalupahana, *Causality*, p. 143.)

33. Mizuno, *Primitive Buddhism*, 132f.

34. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.10.

35. *Ibid.*, III.26, II.30, II.25.

36. *Dīgha Nikāya*, II.33.

37. *Ibid.*, II.36.

38. *Ibid.*, II.37–39.

39. *Ibid.*, II.41.

40. *Vinaya*, Mahavagga 1.1.

41. From the Rig Veda's description of the wheel of Surya, the sun, to Gandhi's spinning wheel, which became the symbol of national independence, the *cakra* (Pali: *cakka*) has been a dominant motif in Indian culture. As such it signifies both power and unity. It was adopted early on by the Buddhists to represent, most preeminently, the Wheel of the Law or the Dharma (Pali: *Dhamma Cakka*). The Buddha's teaching constitutes its "Turning" and makes him the *Dhamma Cakkavatti* or the sovereign of the Wheel of the Dharma. Incorporating the twelve *nidānas* in a circular form, the wheel also became the *Bhava Cakka* or Wheel of Life, conveying both the rebirth and the interplay of causal factors. Used first metaphorically by Buddhaghosa to indicate the beginninglessness and interdependence of *paṭicca samuppāda (Visuddhimagga*, I.198: II.576–8), this application of the wheel symbol was amplified by the Sarvāstivādins in the *Divyavadāna* (Karunaratne, p. 25) and in a manner which was later adopted by the Tibetans. There, in Tibetan art, it features three concentric circles: at the center and representing lust, hatred and delusion, a cock, snake and pig pursue each other, while the next circle pictures the six realms of existence, from animals to humans to gods and hungry ghosts; enclosing these and arrayed around the rim of the wheel are portrayals of the twelve factors of dependent co-arising.

196/3

42. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.28,65; *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.262, II.32 *inter alia*. In the Pali the same demonstrative pronoun "this" is employed throughout, but in translation "that" is alternatively inserted for clarity.

43. Dīgha Nikāya, pp. 42–43.

Dependent Co-Arising as Mutual Causality

> This were a matter hard to perceive, namely this conditionality, this paṭicca samuppāda . . . against the stream of common thought, deep, subtle, difficult, delicate. . . . [1]

The Buddha asserted that his teaching of causality was hard to understand. Scholars of the Dharma have found this to be true. Their efforts to grasp and convey the significance of *paṭicca samuppāda* have led to differences and, in the opinion of Ven. Nyanatiloka, many distortions.

> None of all the teachings of Buddhism has given rise to greater misunderstandings, to more contradictory and more absurd speculations and interpretations than the Paṭicca Samuppāda, the teaching of the Dependent Origination of all phenomena of existence.[2]

Theodor Stcherbatsky, the Russian scholar who devoted years to the study of Buddhist logic, expresses his view of interpretations of *paṭicca samuppāda* with similar vehemence. "There is perhaps no other Buddhist doctrine which has been so utterly misunderstood and upon which such a wealth of unfounded guesses and fanciful philosophizing has been spent."[3]

While interpretations of the doctrine of dependent co-arising have varied, most scholars have recognized it as central to the Buddhist view of reality. By virtue of the universality and impersonality of the causal process it perceives, it has also been acclaimed as a milestone in the history of human thought. Relatively few scholars, however, have identified or emphasized the reciprocal nature of the

causality it presents. Generally, it has not been seen as an issue, and therefore has not been presented as either distinctive or significant.[4]

The reciprocity of causal process is integral to the Buddha's teaching of *paṭicca samuppāda*. It is inherent in the doctrine of *anicca* and the denial of a first cause, evident in the interdependence of causal factors, and reflected in the linguistic structures employed.

From Substance to Relation

Maruyama has pointed out that "the unidirectional causal paradigm originated [in a logic] based on the concepts of 'substance' and 'identity'."[5] The early Greek notion of the universe as composed of basic substances (Anaximander's conception of one proto-substance and Anaxagoras's idea of a power-substance identified with soul, order, and rationality) led, Maruyama argues, to the classifications and deductive thinking of Aristotle. There the stuff of the universe is ordered and ranked in terms of nonoverlapping abstract categories, and circular reasoning is forbidden. In the East, Vedic thought is essentialist and substantialist in that the Ātman, the locus of reality and power, is perceived as a subtle substance underlying and permeating the phenomenal world. Whether substance is perceived monistically as in the Upaniṣads or pluralistically as in Mīmāṃsā, (a classic Brahmanic school of thought), it is the ultimate material of the world and the locus of agency.

Where reality is seen as substance, subtle or gross, causal efficacy is attributed to potency inherent in the objects manifesting or comprising the basic stuff of the world. In other words, reality is seen, not as constituted primarily of relationships, but constituted primarily of entities—substances that can impinge on others and transmit properties to them.

To be an entity caused or modified by another particular entity or state means to undergo its power, to receive qualities from it. Such a view involves a dichotomy between substance and attribute. Change, as causation between substances, consists in the unfolding or transmission of properties, whether envisaged as attributes in the Aristotelian sense or as *guṇas* in the Vedantic or Sāṃkhyan sense. In either case, substance is seen as a carrier of attributes, even though this has no basis in experience. For, as Bunge points out in his critique of linear causality, "save by abstraction we never meet anything devoid of qualities and standing apart from change; nor do we find, except by abstraction, qualities outside objects endowed with them."[6] Yet substance—whether its properties are transmitted and altered by pushing from without as in efficient causation, or by ripening from within as in *pariṇamavāda*—is basic to agency in the linear view.

198/3

The Buddhist perception of process cuts the ground from under such a view. The doctrines of *anattā* and *aniccatā* dissolve all notions of enduring, isolable entities and leave no basis for a dichotomy between substance and attribute. Causal formulations and questions which presuppose such substantiality are, from the Buddha's perspective, "not fit." When the follower Phagguna kept asking him to identify the causal agent that produces consciousness, contact, feeling, and other elements of the *nidāna* series, the Buddha criticized the question. Only when the question is rephrased will he provide an answer—and when he does, he substitutes verb for noun, action for substance.

> "Who now, Lord, is it who craves?" "Not a fit question, said the Exalted One. I am not saying [someone] craves. If I were saying so, the question would be a fit one. But I am not saying so. And I not saying so, if you were to ask thus: 'Conditioned now by what, lord, is craving?' this were a fit question. And the fit answer there would be: 'Conditioned by feeling is craving'."[7]

In the early Buddhist view, the tendency to substantialize and hypostatize the co-arising factors of existence creates the human predicament. Reifying them, we lay ourselves open to attachments and aversions—hence our need to experience their transience. As it says in the *Dvayatānupassanā sutta*, he proceeds correctly "who sees no essence in the *upadhis*" (or factors of experience).[8]

To interpret the Buddhist position as one which replaces being with nonbeing as the causal substratum is a mistake. This move was made by the 19th-century French scholar Burnouf and his colleague Goldstuecker, who saw in Buddhist causality the factors of existence as emerging in degree from "le non-être" (non-being) and "le néant" (nothingness), as from a primary, undifferentiated stuff.[9] Hermann Oldenberg, writing a generation later, pointed out the error. Emphasizing the centrality of *anicca*, he affirmed that *paṭicca samuppāda* is a function of relationship and that the "becoming" of things arises from "their standing in that mutual relation".

> We prefer to avoid every expression which would make Buddhism regard non-being as the true substance of things, and to

express ourselves thus. The speculation of the Brahmans apprehended being in all becoming, that of the Buddhists becoming in all apparent being. In the former case substance without causality, in the latter causality without substance.[10]

The doctrines of *anicca* and *anattā* desubstantiate reality. The Buddhist vision of process, to which they attest, is fundamental to dependent co-arising and makes it radically different from concepts which presuppose that causality is something occurring between substances. To understand it we must move, as Frederick Streng points out, beyond "conventional views of causality".

> All [Indian Buddhists] recognized that life could not be properly understood . . . without seeing beyond conventional views of causality. The usual common knowledge procedure for understanding causality is to conceive of causal relations as an intermediate force between two separate entities, e.g. an agent and a result of an agent's action. This set of notions, however, from the Buddhist perspective is a mental projection imbued with illusory tendencies. . . . As long as one thinks in terms of self-existent entities . . . there is an effective "being stationed" (*pratiṣṭhitam*) by a subject-object dichotomy.[11]

No First Cause

Linear causality offers us causal chains by which we can endeavor to understand how things have arisen. *D* is caused by *C* and *C* is produced by *B*, which in turn is the result of *A* and so on. Thus causal action can be traced backwards, whether from the ghee to the uncurdled milk or from the final pattern on the billiard table to impact on the first ball. But what produced the milk? Who held the billiard cue? And the same question can be asked about the cow and the pool player. Linear causal chains require either a first cause or infinite regress. Either we end up with an Unmoved Mover, which is a metaphysical assertion, or with a dizzying *regressus ad infinitum*. Instead of explaining the unknown in terms of the known, both, as Bunge points out, do the opposite.[12]

In spite of its difficulties, the notion of a first cause is inherent in the unidirectional view, both as a logical necessity and as a religious predisposition. Many scholars of Western and Hindu background, betraying the linear assumptions of their own traditions, have ascribed it to the Buddhist doctrine. Because *avijjā* (ignorance)

frequently stands at the start of the series of *nidānas*, the conditioned factors of existence, they have taken it as a prime cause.

Such a move has been made by a number of noted figures in the field—from Brian Hodgson, the founder of Western Buddhist studies, who presents *avijjā* as "the first act" of the not-yet-individualized soul,[13] to T. W. Rhys Davids and William Stede who, in their Pali-English dictionary, qualify *avijjā* as "the primary cause of all existence." Even Stcherbatsky, who at some points acknowledges the principle of interdependence in Buddhist causality, falls into the habit of seeing *avijjā* as "the primary cause (being) the first and fundamental member of the Wheel of Life."[14]

Nyanatiloka bemoans the "absurd speculations" about *paṭicca samuppāda*. This is especially true, he goes on to say, "with regard to Western scholars and writers on Buddhism," who interpret

> *avijjā* as a causeless first principle out of which conscious and physical life has evolved. That all in spite of the Buddha's repeated express declaration that an absolute first beginning of existence is something unthinkable (Anamatagga-Samyutta), and that all such like speculations may lead to imbecility [*Anguttara Nikāyua*, IV. 27] and that one never could imagine a time when there was no Ignorance and no Craving for existence [*Anguttara Nikāyua*, X. 61].[15]

Such an error is not restricted to Westerners nor to our era. It was current in the early centuries of Buddhism, to judge by the arguments against it in the scriptures (such as *Anguttara Nikāya* IV, 27; V, 113, 116; X, 61). Buddhaghosa is more explicit in countering the tendency to attribute causal primacy to ignorance. He stresses that the starting point which *avijjā* occupies in the causal series is figurative only, and a pedagogical device.

> But why is ignorance stated as the beginning here? How then, is ignorance the causeless root-cause of the world . . . ? It is not causeless. For a cause of ignorance is stated thus 'With the arising of cankers there is the arising of ignorance' [Majjhima Nikāya, I. 54]. But there is a figurative way in which it can be treated as the root cause. What way is that? When it is made to serve as a starting point in an exposition of the round [of becoming].[16]
>
> There is no single or multiple fruit of any kind from a single cause . . . [but] the Blessed One employs one representative

cause and fruit when it is suitable for the sake of elegance in instruction and to suit the idiosyncrasies of those susceptible of being taught.[17]

When treated by scholars as a first cause, *avijjā* becomes a generalized principle or a primordial state. In contrast, Oldenberg argues that the early texts present ignorance as the nonpossession of a specific knowledge. There *avijjā* consists in not-knowing the Four Noble Truths, ignoring the causes for the arising and cessation of suffering.[18]

Far from being a causeless first principle, "ignorance," as the Buddha taught, "is causally conditioned."[19] Indeed there is, in the *suttas* and *vinaya*, no entity, essence, or condition which is presented as a primordial and uncaused starting point. The Buddha not only declined to teach the existence of a first cause, but, indeed, discouraged any such inquiry.

> Would you, O monks, knowing and seeing thus probe [lit. "run behind"] the prior end of things . . . or pursue [lit. "run after"] the final end of things?[20]
>
> Incalculable is the beginning, brethren, of this faring on. The earliest point is not revealed of the running on, the faring on, of beings cloaked in ignorance, tied to craving.[21]

The term translated here as "incalculable" is *anamata*, which means "cannot be thought." Beginnings are unthinkable not only because they are distant in time, but also because the thinking mind is part of the causal arising, emerges from it and contributes to it, and cannot stand outside the "faring on" to trace its origin.

Passages such as these suggest that the Buddha's noted silence on matters that are "indeterminate" relates to *paṭicca samuppāda*. Speculation on abstract matters, as he made clear, can be fruitless, a distraction on the path, and can lead to dissension. Perhaps the Buddha saw another danger there as well—that of assuming or seeking a first cause. When asked how diverse opinions arose on matters eternal, and disputation on such topics as the origin and duration of the world, the Buddha answered that they arose through ignorance of the arising and ceasing of causal factors.[22] This suggests that such metaphysical argumentation is, in his view, conditioned by the assumption that a first cause can exist and be identified—an assumption undercut by *paṭicca samuppāda* and its stress on complete conditionality.

The interrelatedness of all causes, wherein no one factor emerges as solely determinative, is expressed in many a metaphor and analogy in the early scriptures. Take a plant: No neat linear chain can present the conditions which permit it to grow. The seed is not enough; soil is required and moisture.[23] Similarly, from the conjunction of events, that is, from relationship, fire ignites. "From the adjusted friction of two sticks, heat is born, a spark is brought forth, but from the separating and withdrawing of just those two sticks, the heat which was consequent, that ceases, that is quenched."[24] So also is a house constructed. There the rafters, "all converging to the roof-peak, resorting equally to the roof-peak," support each other in mutual dependence, none able to stand alone.[25] Buddhaghosa, arguing against the primacy of any one causal factor, used the simile of the creeper. The creeping vine runs along the ground and, like the teaching of *paṭicca samuppāda* itself, can be seized at any point.

> Namely, from the beginning, from the middle up to the end, from the end, from the middle down to the beginning. . . . Why does the Blessed One teach [dependent origination] thus? Because the dependent origination is entirely beneficial: starting from any one of the four starting points, it leads only to the penetration of the proper way.[26]

Syntax of Interdependence

The very language and grammatical forms used in the teachings of *paṭicca samuppāda* imply that it entails a nonlinear kind of causality. The departure from linear assumptions, and the emphasis on relationship rather than substance, is discernible both in the choice of terms and their inflection.

Take the series of *nidānas*. On the night of his enlightenment the Buddha contemplated these factors of existence to understand how suffering arises. The semantics of the questions he asked himself is noteworthy: "What now being present, is craving also present? What conditions craving?"[27] He does not seek to determine what makes, generates, or produces a given factor; the issue is rather what is present when *A* is present and what conditions *A*. The assertions, then, which follow these questions, and feature in his subsequent teaching of the causal doctrine, take the form of an enumeration of conditions: "conditioned by *A*, *B* arises." More literally it is "conditioned by" or "depending on *A*, *B*" (*viññāṇa-*

paccayā-nāmarūpa, conditioned by consciousness, name-and-form), since in translation the word "arises" is inserted.

The causal term employed is *paccaya*, which literally means "support." Like *paṭicca*, it stems from the verb *pacceti*, to come back to or fall back on. In the Abhidharma *paccaya* came to be used as a generic category embracing all forms of relation, the events to which they give rise being termed *paccayuppanna*. The ablative *paccayā*, used in this series, is an adverbial form denoting "by means of," or "depending on," to which the usual translation "conditioned by" is not inappropriate. In contrast to the Vedic theories of *svadhā* and *satkāryavāda*, this language does not present a causation wherein *B* issues from a potency of *A* or represents a self-evolution of *A*. It points to the function, not of that which genetically produces out of inherent power, but of that which in relationship, by its presence, occasions and supports. If causation as production had been meant, the teaching could have used a verb like *kar* (make) as in *satkāryavāda*. With the use of *paccaya*, however, it presents causation not in terms of unilateral power but in terms of relationship—that which "being present," facilitates, catalyzes, or occasions.

The process nature of the reality to which this usage of *paccaya* points, and the departure from efficient causation it entails, are stressed by Caroline Rhys Davids and S. Z. Aung.

> *Paccaya* . . . implies that, for Buddhist philosophy, all modes of relation have causal significance, though the causal efficacy . . . may be absent. To understand this we must consider everything, not as statically existing, but as "happening" or "event." We may then go on to define *paccaya* as an event which helps to account for the happening of the *paccayuppanna*, i.e. the effect, or "what-has-happened-through-the-*paccaya*." . . . Dropping our notion of efficient cause (A as having power to produce B), and holding to the "helping to happen" notion, we see . . . *paccaya* as . . . helping (*upakaraka*).[28]

I noted in the last chapter that *ida-paccayatā* is used as a synonym for *paṭicca samuppāda* and referred to its translation as "this conditionality." Aung and C. Rhys Davids are perhaps more accurate in expressing it as "the conditionedness of this." Using *A* to represent "cause" and *B* "effect," they say, in the same passage quoted above, that

> "This (*ida*) refers to B, but the compound refers to A: A is the "*paccaya*-of-*this*." The abstract form is the only philosophic way of expressing *paccaya*."[29]

Now let us turn to the short four-part formula which, as specified in Chapter 2, represents a capsule version of *paṭicca samuppāda*: This being, that becomes; from the arising of this, that arises; this not being, that becomes not; from the ceasing of this, that ceases.

Here again the language does not state that *A* makes or produces *B* or that *B* emerges from *A*; the locative of the participle is used, suggesting that in the happening (or not happening) of *A*, *B* happens (or does not happen). This relation is closer to a "when" or an "if" connection, than to a "because," (and indeed both "if" and "when" are sometimes used in translations, "if this is, that comes to be"). The "because" relation tends to be more indicative of linear production—as in the phrase, "the iron is red because it is in the fire" (i.e. the fire *makes* the iron red), contrasted with "it being Sunday, the library is closed" (i.e. Sunday does not close the library).

In Pali, the notion of making something be or happen is conveyed by the causative form of the verb. As G. C. Pande has pointed out, this formula does not read *idaṃ uppannaṃ idaṃ uppādeti* (the causative form of *uppajjati*), which would translate "this, arising, makes that to arise".[30]

These events are not merely contiguous or coincidental. The Pali does not read *idaṃ uppannaṃ idaṃ uppajjati*, with the first clause in the nominative; that would suggest coincidence, or mere sequence. But the first clause appears in the locative absolute, indicating that *B* happens *in relation to* the happening of *A*. The happening of *A* provides a locus or context in which *B* can happen. So more is involved than a contiguity of events, as in Hume's view. In Hume's interpretation of causality, which is sometimes mistakenly equated with the Buddhist, events flow past and are essentially, objectively unrelated. Our mental operations infer causal connection. In contrast, the Buddha's view perceived ontological as well as epistemological connection, as witnessed by the locative form.

In arguing that Buddhist causality is presented in these texts as an objective phenomenon rather than a subjective projection, Kalupahana calls attention to the second and fourth phrases of the formula.[31] The teaching does not simply state that "when this is, that is and when this is not, that is not," it also includes verbs of transformation, of arising and ceasing. These are not, as Kalupa-

hana points out, merely repetitions of the preceding phrase. With the change of verb (from being to arising, from not-being to ceasing) they stress the possibility of novelty, of new generation and new cessation.

A perhaps more telling argument for the objective status of *paṭicca samuppāda* resides in the texts' assertion that this causal law exists independently of the Buddhas; it has a reality external to their perception of it. "Whether, brethren, there be an arising of Tathāgatas, or whether there be no such arising, this nature of things just stands, this causal status, this causal orderliness."[32] The enlightened ones do not invent it or infer it, but rediscover it. More than a private interpretation of reality, it led the Buddha to speak of it in terms of "the nature of things" (*dhammatā*).[33]

Two more etymological points remain to be made. *Paṭicca* and *paccaya*, terms basic to Pali expositions of dependent co-arising, both stem, as I noted, from the verb *pacceti*. Composed of *pati* + *i*, it means to come or go back to. Present, then, is the notion of return or reverse movement which the preposition *pati*, "back to," denotes. As I turn in the next chapter to systems theory, I will show how central to its notion of mutual causality is the concept of feedback. The effects of any action are fed back into the organism, and by virtue of this feedback systems are interdeterminative. The perception of return in causal flow is present linguistically in these central terms of *paṭicca* and *paccaya*. It also is discernible in our own language in the very word "relation"—*re-latus*, meaning originally, "that which is carried back." *A*, in relating to *B*, brings it back to itself; self-reference, which the cybernetic view of things makes explicit, is implicit in these Pali terms, as well as in the roots of our own speech.

Nidāna and *upadhi* are terms applied to the factors which condition existence, be they mental or physical. Present in the etymology of both is the notion of constraint. *Upadhi*, the earlier term, connotes not only basis or foundation, but also impediment, bond, restriction. As for *nidāna*, it stems directly from the verb to bind or fetter (*dā*, *dyati*).

The notion of constraint imbedded in these terms underscores the character of causality. When causal efficacy is attributed to relation rather than to substance, then, as systems theorists have pointed out, it operates in terms of the constraints these relations impose on phenomenality (see p.78). Systems self-organize and evolve by virtue of invariant relations whose constraints, channel-

202/3

Reciprocity of Causal Factors

The conditioned factors of existence are presented in serial form; indeed language itself constrains us to express things sequentially. Although some scholars have interpreted these factors as a linear causal chain, textual evidence abounds that their relationship is one of mutual dependence. This interdependence is implicit in a relational view of reality and in the absence of a first cause; here in the interaction of the *nidānas*, or *upadhis* their reciprocity is more explicit.

An early text on dependent co-arising, the *Dvayatānupassanā sutta*, presents each *upadhi* as the cause of the others:

> Whatever pain arises is all in consequence of *avijjā* . . . from the complete destruction of *avijjā* there is no origin of pain. . . .
>
> Whatever pain arises is all in consequence of the *saṇkhārās* . . . from the complete destruction of the *saṇkhārās* there is no origin of pain. . . .
>
> Whatever pain arises is all in consequence of *viññāna* [and so on].[35]

These phrases are repeated for all the rest. Here the series clearly represents no linear chain: Each *upadhi*, in giving rise to all pain, gives rise to the others. Occasioning and occasioned by each other, their causality is mutual. Like a house of cards, the constellation of factors that condition our existence can be disrupted and collapsed at any point.

Sheaves or bundles of reeds propped together, leaning on one another, is a simile used in the scriptures. Such is the relation ascribed to *viññāna* (consciousness) and *nāmarūpa* (name-and-form). It is with these two factors that the causal series frequently interrupts its enumeration and, after stating that *nāmarūpa* arises conditioned by *viññāna*, circles back and states that *viññāna* in turn arises conditioned by *nāmarūpa*. Here causal reciprocity is so explicit that a number of scholars have been struck by it and some, like Keith and Thomas, have seen in it a logical objection to dependent co-arising.[36] Koṭṭhita, discussing the matter with Śariputra, the most scholarly of the Buddha's disciples, says,

> Lo! now we understand the venerable Śariputra's words

consciousness is conditioned by name-and-form. How, friend Śariputra, is the meaning of what you have said to be regarded?

Well, friend, I will make you a simile, for through a simile some intelligent men admit the meaning of what has been said. It is just as if, friend, there stood two sheaves of reeds leaning one against the other. Even so, friend, name-and-form comes to pass conditioned by consciousness, consciousness conditioned by name-and-form, sense conditioned by name-and-form, and so on. . . .

If, friend, I were to pull towards me one of those sheaves of reeds, the other would fall; if I were to pull towards me the other, the former would fall.[37]

A similar image, a tripod of three sticks, is used to illustrate the relationship between the *khaṇḍas*, the aggregates of which the sense of self is composed.[38]

In the causal series the reciprocity between *nāmarūpa* and *viññāna* is emphasized most, probably to contrast it with the Brahmanical view, which gave consciousness ontological and axiological primacy over material manifestations. But its causal relations with other factors are seen as mutual also, as is implied in Śariputra's inclusion of "sense and so on" in his simile of the reeds.

Take the relation of consciousness to the preceding *nidāna*, by which it is conditioned: *saṅkhārā*, volitional formulations. While these formations are presented in this series as formative of consciousness, they are in turn conditioned by it. This notion is present in its meaning, which derives from *saṅkhata*, "compounded" or "put together." It is our conscious acts and intentions which modify the volitions which in turn shape our consciousness.

That which we will, brethren, and that which we intend to do and that wherewithal we are occupied: this becomes an object for the persistence of consciousness.[39]

The same causal mutuality can be seen in the relation of *saṅkhārā* to the factor which precedes it in the series, *avijjā*. While our ignorance shapes our volitions, these do not evolve unidirectionally from a preexistent state of ignorance, as Burnouf, Coomaraswamy, and others interpreted, but they in turn feed and perpetuate our ignorance. This point is stressed in the *Kathāvatthu*

of the Abhidharma.[40] In opposition to the view attributed to the Mahāsaṅghikas, that "whereas actions are conditioned by ignorance, we may not say that ignorance is conditioned by actions," the Theravadins responded that *avijjā* was co-existent with *saṅkhārā*, and that just as *viññāna* and *nāmarūpa* are reciprocally caused, so can be ignorance and volition or grasping and craving. "Then the conditioning relation can be reciprocal," states the text.[40]

The Pali term is *aññamañña*. Literally "one another," it appears on translations as "reciprocal" and "mutual." While it came to be used technically by the Abhidharmists as a specific type of causal relation, Buddhaghosa used the term to qualify the import of the causal doctrine as a whole.[41] He defines *paṭicca samuppāda* as the mode of causality according to which "phenomena arise together in reciprocal dependence (*aññamañña paṭicca*)"

In the early texts this reciprocity, which characterizes the interaction of *viññāna* and *nāmarūpa*, and *viññāna*, *saṅkhārā*, and *avijjā*, functions also in the arising of *tanhā* or craving. While eighth in the *nidāna* series, as arising conditioned by feeling, it is a key factor in our suffering, as the second and third noble Truths declare. This has led students of Buddhism to wonder which is considered more causative of humanity's fallen state, ignorance or desire. Is it ignorance, as in the Platonic view, or is the vision more like the Pauline in seeing the egocentricity of craving as fundamental? From the viewpoint of the Nikāyas, the answer is both. *Avijjā* is emphasized by being most frequently placed first in the *nidāna* series; *tanhā* is emphasized in the Noble Truths and, on occasion, as the first element in *dukkhasamudaya*.[42] Buddhaghosa points out that both can be "starting points" of the teaching.[43] That neither can be reduced to the other is suggested by the phrase quoted above, descriptive of *saṃsāra*: It is the faring on of beings "cloaked in ignorance, tied to craving".[44] Neither factor is reducible to the other because they are mutually generative: As ignorance propels our craving, so does craving mire us in ignorance.

In similar fashion do *tanhā* and the notion of self (*attā*) reflect a process of mutual causation. All the components of the sense of separate selfhood, categorized in the *Mahātānhasankhaya sutta* as material food, sense perception, volitions, and thoughts, have "craving as the provenance, craving as source, craving as birth, craving as origin."[45] The mythical account of genesis in the *Aggaññasutta* illustrates how craving leads to the illusion of ego. Feeding greedily on the fruits of earth, beings grew more conscious and prideful of their individual attributes.[46] The notion of having an enduring self is one

of the four forms of grasping (*upādāna*), which in the series arises conditioned by craving.[47] Yet just as craving feeds it, so does the illusion of self in turn feed craving.

> Now Rahula, when a monk by perfect wisdom realizes with regard to the elements [which comprise the human being] 'this is not mine, this is not I, this is not my attā,' then does he cut himself off from craving, loosen bonds and by overcoming the vain conceit [of attā] make an end of suffering.[48]

Thus do *tanhā* and *attā* appear as interdependent, their causal relationship reciprocal. As with the bundles of reeds, the removal of one collapses the other.

In the "Great Discourse on the Destruction of Craving," quoted above, sensory perception is seen as formative of the sense of self, along with physical sustenance, volitions, and mental constructs. This teaching is made vivid by the metaphor of food (*āhāra*). "These four foods sustain creatures that have come to be."[49] The food image suggests that the reality with which we deal is something we process—we ingest it and pass it through our system. We cannot confront it as something "out there," cleanly and neatly separable from our observing consciousness. Rather it is in us, of us, shaping our very perceptions.

The *nidāna* series, therefore, appears not as a linear causal sequence so much as a network of interacting and mutually affecting conditions. Anagarika Govinda, the German-born monk and lama, writes of the "dynamic character" of *paṭicca samuppāda:*

> Every link can be combined with another . . . and, indeed, in whichever succession one chooses. . . . In this way we have neither a purely temporal, nor yet a purely logical causality, but a living, organic relationship, a simultaneous correlation, juxtaposition and succession of all the links, in which each, so to say, represents the transverse summation of all the others, and bears in itself its whole past as well as all the possibilities of its future. And precisely on this account the entire chain at every moment and from every phase of it, is removable.[50]

Abhidharmist Interpretations

My study of Buddhist causality is based on the *suttas* and *vinaya piṭaka* of the Pali Canon, those first two "baskets" of scripture which represent the earliest written records we have of Buddhist teachings. They represent what Buddhist scholar Mizuno terms "primitive Buddhism" and Edward Conze, "archaic Buddhism." The texts of the third basket, the *Abhidharma Piṭaka*, a scholastic elaboration of the philosophic aspects of the teachings, represent a later development in Buddhist thought, as evidenced by their terminology and content.[51]

. . In the Abhidharma, both of the Theravadin and Sarvastivadin schools, analytical theorizing about the nature of causal relationships is conducted and brought to a high degree of sophistication and complexity. That development, with the density and intricacy of its language and logic, influenced many later scholarly views of Buddhist causality as a whole. Yet in that development certain shifts occurred, subtle but significant differences in the way *paṭicca samuppāda* is presented.

These differences are often overlooked. Many teachers of Buddhism today and even scholars of the stature of Stcherbatsky and Conze have imputed to the earlier teachings speculative elements that did not appear until the Abhidharma. Because these differences have colored interpretations of the Buddha's teachings and because they represent a partial shift to a more linear view of causality, it is important to specify and summarize them here. They are fourfold: (1) the notion of momentariness; (2) the postulation of unconditioned dharmas; (3) the distinction between substance and attribute; and (4) the presentation of the *nidāna* series as a sequence of three lives.

The Notion of Momentariness

The early texts stressed the impermanence and interaction of phenomena, but did not try to analyze their ontological nature. The Abhidharmists sought to determine the intrinsic character of the elements in interaction, that is, the dharmas. These represent the psycho-physical units of experience, the fundamental building blocks into which conventional reality can be dissected. As such they were differentiated, enumerated, and classified and elaborate theories mounted as to their nature, number, and duration. These theories tended to hypostatize the dharmas as discrete entities, as "facts which are ultimately real."[52] As Streng has noted, this represents "an unfortunate drift back into essentialist thinking."[53]

In the Abhidharmist effort to accommodate this substantialism to a dynamic vision of reality, these dharmas came to be seen as

instants, replacing each other with lightning rapidity, too brief to interact or do more than succeed each other in time. As a consequence, impermanence (*aniccatā*) became momentariness (*khanikā*), and causation became mere sequence. The dharmas are seen as too instantaneous to have any connection beyond that of succession.[54] This notion is close to Hume's view of causality, one which is often compared to the Buddhist, but the similarity with Hume extends only to the Abhidharma and not to earlier Buddhism.[55]

In the early texts, as Kalupahana argues, phenomena are presented as impermanent but not as momentary. There "empirical things . . . are observable facts existing for some time, and they can act successively or simultaneously because they are not momentary."[56] In addition to the time factor, there are critical questions of ontology and epistemology. The point is not so much how long a thing endures, but whether causality is posited in terms of things or relations. A reason why momentariness or *khanikā* does not appear and is not likely to appear in the early texts is because the earlier Buddhists did not attempt a metaphysical analysis of reality in terms of discrete entities. While the self, for example, was broken down into the five aggregates, the emphasis was less on the distinct nature of these components than on their impermanence.

The Postulation of Unconditioned Dharmas

Another Abhidharmist modification is the postulation that there are aspects of reality, or dharmas, which are unconditioned, namely *nibbāna* and *akaśa* (space). This represents a shift in the usage of the term *asaṅkhata* (Sanskrit: *asamskṛta*). In the earlier scriptures *saṅkhata* means "put together," "compounded," "organized"—and therefore subject to dissolution. The word did not mean conditioned, nor did its opposite, *asaṅkhata* (applied to *nibbāna*) mean unconditioned. Indeed nothing is seen in the early texts as unconditioned, removed from the realm of causality. As Kalupahana asserts, the pre-Abhidharmist texts qualify no entity, essence, or state as *apaṭicca samuppāna*.[57] Nor is emancipation in the early texts presented as an escape from causality. It is reached rather by employing causation, by using the leverage of conditionality. *Nibbāna* is presented as attainable, not by exiting from the series of conditioned *nidānas*, but by substituting through practice *nirodha* for *samudaya*. "I say that liberation is causally associated, not uncausally associated," said the Buddha.[58]

With the Abhidharma *asaṅkhata* begins to be used to denote "unconditioned," as is evident, for example, in the classification of

dharmas in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*.[59] There, only *nibbāna* is in that category, while the lists of other schools include *akaśa* as well.[60] As such, the meaning of *asaṅkhata* comes to be used synonymously with *ahetujam*, "not the product of a cause."[61]

This move is understandable in terms of the shift toward a more substantialist and linear view, where effects preexist in their causes, and are produced by them. Since *nibbāna* cannot be produced in this way, it is imagined that it must then be removed completely from the causal realm—and posited as unconditioned. Such a move encourages interpretations which tend to equate *nibbāna* with a metaphysical absolute. It also has the effect of taking release and assigning it to another dimension than the world of contingency and need in which we live. That this shift has influenced scholars' views of Buddhist teachings as a whole is evident in Conze, who states that it is "the basic teaching of the Buddha" that "salvation can only be found through escape to the Unconditioned."[62]

The Distinction Between Substance and Attribute

For its purposes of analysis the Abhidharma posited categorical distinctions between dharmas (things or psychophysical events), which did not figure in the Buddha's recorded teachings. The distinction was made between conventional or relative reality and Ultimate Reality (*paramattha desanā*), suggesting the existence of an absolute truth or realm apart from the world of appearances.[63] A similar categorical distinction arose between the mental and physical realms, the Abhidharma itself being presented as *nāmarūpapariccheda*, the analysis into mind and matter.[64] Mind (*citta*) and its mental properties (*cetasika*) were defined as nonmaterial (*arūpa*) (with *nibbāna* in some texts assigned to the mental realm) in contrast to the nonmental (*acetasika*) character of matter.

This dualistic drift fostered attitudes toward the body and the phenomenal world, that have characterized the Theravada and influenced other forms of Buddhism as well. It also caused philosophic problems for the scholastics, which Kalupahana examines at length and which relates to a third distinction the scholastics made: a thing (*dharma*) and its characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*).[65] This opens the way to the notion of an underlying substance, which serves to provide the continuity that was lost in the arising of the idea of momentariness. As we are reminded by critiques of linear causality in our own century, the distinction between substance and attribute leads to a unidirectional view of causal action (see Chapter 5).

The Presentation of the Nidāna Series as a Sequence of Three Lives

The fourth departure from earlier causal views, which we should note in the Abhidharma, is the presentation of the *nidāna* series in terms of three successive lives. As such it comes to represent the cycle of rebirth and is termed the "Twofold Causation extending to the Three Times," (twofold meaning *samudaya* and *nirodha*). In this interpretation, which is often equated with the Buddha's teaching of dependent co-arising itself, the first two factors, *avijjā* and *saṅkhārā*, are taken to represent causes incurred in a former life. The next seven represent present existence, *viññāna* through *vedanā* being the present fruits of past causes, while *taṇhā* and *upādāna* are the present causes of the future. The last three, *bhava*, *jāti*, and *jarāmaraṇa*, figure as the future fruits of present action, or a third life.

This view was not taught in the *suttas* and *vinaya*.[66] There the *nidānas*, functioned more as examples of how life is conditioned than as precise and specific determinants. According to Mizuno, the reference to *viññāna* as rebirth-consciousness was meant as a popular illustration only, and the series of factors themselves, which reveal no single authoritative version, exhibit too much variety to denote a rigid schema of three lives. Their number, their order, and their character vary in the early texts, as we have noted—some series amounting to ten, some to twelve or more, some preceding consciousness with contact and feeling, some including factors of joy and faith.[67] The order and precise composition of the sequence clearly do not constitute the main tenet of the teaching.[68] In the Abhidharma, however, these terms are accorded particular importance and specificity, as one form of the series, the one that occurs most frequently in the Nikayas, is taken to represent the sequential unfolding of cause and effect through a person's successive lives. What had been, as Mizuno suggests, a popular metaphoric and mnemonic device is here literalized. Like the view of *nibbāna* as unconditioned, it is likely that this development arose partially as a result of the tendency to substantialize the dharmas. In any case the Abhidharmists accorded to each *nidāna* an ontological significance not evident in the *suttas* and *vinaya*, and their three-lives interpretation tends to present the series as a linear causal chain. As such it obscures the reciprocal dynamic we examined above, the ways in which, within a given life, indeed a given moment, one's volitions [illegible] interdetermine each other.

206/3

Paṭicca Samuppāda as Interdependence

Despite later divergences of some Abhidharmist and scholarly interpretations, it is clear that *paṭicca samuppāda* in the early texts teaches "the interdependent structure" of reality. In the words of Mizuno,

> The Buddha awoke to the interdependent structure of the world and attained enlightenment under the bodhi tree. From this standpoint, we may say that Buddhism stands basically on the thought of interdependence.[69]

The Buddha said that it was difficult to understand. Hardly self-evident from the conventional viewing of things, *paṭicca samuppāda* is, as the texts reiterate, deep and subtle, hard to perceive, and requiring insight. In the accounts of the enlightenment and subsequent causal teachings, a phrase recurs which refers to the kind of thinking involved in the perception of mutual causality. This is *yoniso manasikāra*. *Manasikāra* is from a verb meaning to "ponder," to "take to heart," and denotes deep attention or attentive pondering. Here this pondering is qualified by *yoniso*, the ablative of *yoni*. *Yoni*, literally, is "womb." By extension it came to mean "origin," "way of being born," and "matrix."

Yoniso manasikāra offers multiple and fruitful connotations for the way we can think about dependent co-arising. Referring to womb it connotes generation, the arising of phenomena. As "matrix," it suggests the web of interdependence in which these phenomena partidipate. It is not a dissecting or categorizing exercise of the intellect. Synthetic rather than analytic, it involves an awareness of wholeness—a wide and intent openness or attentiveness wherein all factors can be included, their interrelationships beheld.

Herbert Guenther, suggesting that such a style of thought is not characteristic of the West, stresses the doctrine's divergence from the linear perspective.[70]

> In talking about causality in Buddhism, it is of the utmost importance to be aware of the points of divergence from our ways of thinking. The conceptual framework of Buddhist associative and co-ordinative thinking was something different from the traditional European causal and nomothetic thinking. [It posits] a network of interdependent, co-existing and freely

cooperating forces and in this network at any time any one factor may take the highest place in a hierarchy of causes and effects.

Commenting on the role that this accords to conscious beings, Guenther goes on to say,

> It is he who as 'causal agent' creates his world which, in turn, is a 'causal agent' creating him. This is so, because 'causality' in Buddhism is, as has been noted, an interlocking system and not a linear sequence of cause and effect.

This causality is, then, both relative and objective: Objectively inhering in the nature of things, it is relative, not as a subjective opinion but by virtue of the interdependence of phenomena. This notion of interdependence so pervades the Buddha's teachings that even his giving of the Law itself is presented as conditioned. No unilateral revelation from on high, its appearance arises from the very conditions to which we all are subject. It is not the product of another purer realm, a dimension divorced from despair, but occurs in dependence on the very turmoil of birth, decay, dying, that is the definition of *saṃsāra*. In an utterance predictive of Nagarjuna's later affirmation of the dialectical interplay between *saṃsāra* and *nirvāna*, the Buddha says:

> If these three things were not in the world, my disciples, the Perfect One, the holy supreme Buddha, would not appear in the world, the law and the doctrine, which the Perfect One propounds, would not shine in the world. What three things are they? Birth and old age and death.[71]

This view of causality has far-reaching implications for an understanding of the self and its world, for the perception of the plight and promise intrinsic to human existence. These implications, evident in the Buddha's other teachings, will be drawn out in the final section of this work, along with those discernible in a similar view of causal process—that of general systems theory.

Notes

1. *Digha Nikāya*, II.36

2. Nyanatiloka, *Guide Through the Abhidharma Pitaka*, p. 139.

3. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, I.141.

4. While Kalupahana's study of Buddhist causality in the early scriptures is very helpful in clarifying many of its features, its reciprocal nature is mentioned only in passing (*Causality*, p. 59) and its contrast with linear causality left implicit. This is true also of Rahula (*What Buddha Taught*, p. 53). Govinda, Streng, and Guenther, as well as Oldenberg and C. Rhys Davids, do call attention to the distinctiveness of the mutuality of causes in *paticca samuppāda*, but their work does not examine in depth of the textual bases for this non-linearity, or of its significance in relation to the other teachings of the Buddha.

5. Maruyama, "Symbiotization of Cultural Heterogeneity," pg. 239.

6. Bunge, *Causality*, pg. 199.

7. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II. 13.

8. *Sutta Nipāta*, p. 363.

9. Burnouf, *Introduction à l'histoire du bouddhisme indien*, pp. 485, 507.

10. Oldenberg, *Buddha: Life, Doctrine, Order*, pg. 259, 251.

11. Streng, "Reflections" pg. 79.

12. Bunge, *Causality*, pp. 134–36.

13. Cited in Burnouf, *Introduction à l'histoire du bouddhisme indien*, pg. 506.

14. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist-Logic*, I, p. 142; *Central Conception of Buddhism*, p. 30. Burnouf also saw ignorance as "le point de départ de toutes les existences" (485) *Introduction*. Other scholars who interpret *avijjā* in terms of a first cause, from which all else ensues in a linear sequence, include H. C. Kern (cited in Nyanatiloka, *Guide through the Abhidarma Pitaka*, p. 140) and A. K. Coomaraswamy.

15. Nyanatiloka, *Guide through the Abhidharma Pitaka*, p. 139.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 602.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 623.

18. Oldenberg, *Buddha: Life, Doctrine, Order*, pg. 241. On this subject Caroline Rhys Davids expresses similar views and is more specific in countering the notion that ignorance can be construed as a first cause. Her position is in harmony with her repeated use of the term "mutually dependent" in her discussion of *paticca samuppāda* ("Paticca Samuppāda").

19. *Anguttara Nikāya*, V.113.

20. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.265.

21. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.176.

22. *Ibid.*, III.33.

23. *Ibid.*, I.134; III.54.

24. *Ibid.*, II.96.

25. *Ibid.*, II.262.

26. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, pp. 600–1.

27. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.11.

28. Rhys Davids, C., and Aung, *Points of Controversy*, pp. 390–91. The term *upakaraka* is used by Buddhaghosa to emphasize that the causal function of the factors of existence is that of "assisting" (*Visuddhimagga*, p.533, 612).

29. Rhys Davids, C., and Aung, *Points of Controversy*, p. 391.

30. Pande, *Studies in Origins of Buddhism*, p. 426, n. 135.

31. Kalupahana, *Causality*, p. 95.

32. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.25.

33. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.25; *Anguttara Nikāya*, V.2, 3; *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.324.

34. Whyte, "Structural Hierarchy" p. 275; Ashby, "Principles of Self-Organizing System," p. 131.

35. *Sutta Nipāta*, pp. 729–34.

36. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, pg. 101; Thomas, *History of Buddhist Thought*, pp. 67–68.

37. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II. 113.

38. Nyanatiloka, *Guide Through the Abhidharma Pitaka*, p. 101.

39. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.64.

43. Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, I.603.

44. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.178.

45. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.261.

46. *Dīgha Nikāya*, III,88f.

47. *Ibid.*, II.58.

48. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, II.253.

49. *Majjhima Nikāya*, I.261.

50. Govinda, *Psychological Attitude Early Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 56.

51. Reasons for adducing that the Abhidharma represents thinking that is subsequent in time to the *suttas* and *vinaya* are offered in Pande, *Studies in Origins of Buddhism*, Part I; Mizuno, *Primitive Buddhism*, Chapter I; Rhys Davids, T., *Buddhist India*, 72f; and Lamotte, *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, 168f.

52. Conze, *Buddhist Thought*, p. 197.

53. Streng, *Reflections*, p. 74.

54. In struggling to explain how distinct entities which are instantaneous can enjoy causal relationship, or anything beyond sequential occurrence, the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharmists posited an enduring substratum, a *svabhava*. This led them back into an essentialist dichotomy between substance and quality and opened them to charges of vitiating the Buddha's doctrines of *anicca* and *anattā* (Stcherbatsky, *Central Conception of Buddhism*, pp. 30–31). The Sautrantikas reacted against the substantialism of the Sarvāstivādin view by accentuating the instantaneity of dharmas, seeing them as point-instants so momentary that they self-destruct upon occurrence. Having done that, the Sautrantikas made no serious effort to construe a causal connection.

55. Stcherbatsky refers to the theory of momentariness as "the foundation upon which the whole of the Buddhist system is built (*Buddhist Logic*, p. 119). The Buddhist theory of causation is a direct consequence of the theory of Universal Momentariness" (*Conception of Buddhist Nirvana*, p. 2). Similarly Conze presents "the Buddhist definition of causality" as "the inevitable corollary of the doctrine of momentariness" (*Buddhist Thought*, p. 149). Consequently both scholars see *paticca samuppāda* as similar to the causal view of Hume (Stcherbatsky, *Conception of Buddhist Nirvana*, p. 23;

56. Kalupahana, *Causality*, p. 153.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 140–41.

58. *Samyutta Nikāya*, II.30

59. Nyanatiloka, *Guide through Abhidarma Pitaka*, p. 84.

60. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 308.

61. *Milindapanha*, pp. 268–71; Conze, *Buddhist Thought*, p. 159.

62. Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Stuidies*, pp. 210–11; Similarly, Keith accepts as characteristic of all Buddhist teachings the scholastic categorization of *nibbāna* as unconditioned. Setting this beside scriptural emphasis on the universality of dependent co-arising, he finds contradiction. Unfortunately, this does not prompt him to question his interpretation, but confirms for him the "vagueness of the canonical view." "In the face of this to assign to Buddhism faith in the uniformity of causal process or of nature is absurd" (Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 113).

63. *Dhammasangani*, A 21.

64. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 98.

65. Kalupahana, *Causality*, Chapter 8.

66. Mizuno, *Primitive Buddhism*, p. 132; Pande, *Studies in Origins of Buddhism*, p. 416; Conze, *Buddhist Thought*, p. 157.

67. Such variations in the *nidāna* series are to be found, *inter alia*, in *Samyutta Nikāya*, II.66, 100; III.26; *Digha Nikāya* II.59; *Majjhima Nikāya* I.91, *Sutta Nipāta* 723f.

68. Rhys Davids, T., *Dialogues of Buddha*, p. 45.

69. Mizuno, *Primitive Buddhism*, p. 116.

70. Guenther, *Buddhist Philosophy*, pp. 75–76.

71. *Anguttara Nikāya*, III, quoted in Oldenberg, *Buddha: Life, Doctrine, Order*, p. 217.

4

General Systems Theory

The ideas were generated in many places: in Vienna by Bertalanffy, in Harvard by Wiener, in Princeton by von Neumann, in Bell Telephone labs by Shannon, in Cambridge by Craik, and so on. All these separate developments dealt with . . . the problem of what sort of thing is an organized system. . . . I think that cybernetics is the biggest bite out of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge that mankind has taken in the last 2000 years.

—Gregory Bateson[1]

A leap from reflections on early Buddhist scripture to a presentation of general systems theory[2] is not quite the category-defying acrobatics that it might appear at first glance. Although these two bodies of thought represent very different human enterprises, with differing goals and methods, I dare say the Buddha himself would not regard it as unseemly to consider his teaching side by side with concepts spawned by modern science. He regarded no data, however mundane, as irrelevant to the idea of dependent co-arising, drew copiously on what his era knew of natural phenomena, and considered himself, in contrast to other teachers, as an empiricist relying on that which is known and testable by experience. The interdependence he perceived between the mental and the physical and between thought and perception broadens those areas of inquiry to which his teachings can be seen as relevant. It is not inappropriate, therefore, to consider his teachings in tandem with notions derived from the natural sciences.

In contrast to the linear paradigm that has predominated in Western culture, general systems theory presents a mutual or reciprocal view of causality. Together, these two perspectives, systems and Buddhist, can inform and enrich our understanding of this very different kind of causal process. Before examining how systems the-

CATEGORIES OF SUTTA IN THE PĀLI NIKĀYAS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR APPRECIATION OF THE BUDDHIST TEACHING AND LITERATURE.[1]

The various texts and collections of the Pāli Canon are often treated as if each of them had the same purpose and function. On a superficial level this is of course true: at least from the perspective of our time they are a collection of texts that preserve one school's version of the Buddha's Teaching. But at the very earliest time, in order to ensure the propagation of the new religion, different sorts of material would have been necessary. At the very least the new religion would have had to be made known in a way that would gain both the converts who would make possible its survival, and the lay-supporters who would make possible the survival of the converts. After that appropriate material would be required to integrate the converts into the values and standards of the new religion, and further material to teach them its principles and practices and to help them deepen their commitment and their knowledge. The requirement for different sorts of material for different purposes would from the beginning have spontaneously given rise to different types of collections, i.e. sets of suttas all serving the same function and remembered as a group. At a later time, and under different historical

[1] In this paper translations will be offered in the footnotes to enable comparison by scholars who are unfamiliar with Pāli and who study other oral literatures and related topics.

Textual variations such as name changes, changes in pronoun or in the number of the verbs (singular or plural) and so forth will not be noted as they are not relevant for the purposes of this paper.

Formulas will be numbered consecutively. They will be referred to thus: "1", "2".

DN 16, the *Mahā Parinibbāna Suttanta* will not be included in this study. Frauwallner (1956) has shown that it originally belonged to the *Skandhaka* of the Vinaya Piṭaka, and indeed it is too much an amalgam and too different from the other Dīgha suttas to warrant its inclusion here.

210/3

conditions, the original need which caused certain suttas to be grouped together would have been lost sight of, and other reasons for the grouping together of suttas invented. The explanation that Majjhima Nikāya and Dīgha Nikāya are simply the collection of the long suttas and the collection of the medium length suttas may come from just such a time, after their original functions had been forgotten.

The Majjhima and Dīgha Nikāyas contain little of the categorising of the Aṅguttara and Saṃyutta Nikāyas, few of the rules for the Order, as in Vinaya, and furthermore, they are rather coherent material. They offer an opportunity to study certain of the literary forms in which suttas are presented. A statistical analysis of the proportional representation of each of the main categories of sutta in these two collections suggests that originally each of them came about to serve a separate and distinct purpose. This has implications for our understanding of Buddhist literature and the Teaching it contains.

Suttas in the Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāyas have been generally described as "sermons", "dialogues", "narratives", "discourses",[2] "prose dialogues, legends, pithy sayings, and verses", "speeches",[3] or they may be studied as part of Indian kāvya literature.[4] Categories of sutta in the Dīgha and the Majjhima Nikāyas can, however, be rather more precisely distinguished. The means for making distinctions among the suttas are the formulas which provide their structure: their introductory and concluding formulas, the formulas that occur regularly within certain categories of sutta only, the use of particular verbs and expressions and certain stylised literary features.

This article will provide the criteria for the categorisation of three types of sutta: Sermons, Debates, and Consultations. Most of the suttas in the Nikāyas can be categorised in one of these three ways. Those that cannot

[2] Winternitz, 1933, 34.
[3] Law, 1933, 79, 80.
[4] Warder, 1974, Chapter XII.

include gāthās, and some of the stories and myths. These categories will not be treated in detail here.

A Sermon is defined to be a discourse for the purpose of religious instruction containing exhortation and/or instruction. A Consultation is an occasion where someone, bhikkhu or otherwise, has recourse to the Buddha or to a senior monk for instruction or information, or where the Buddha or a senior monk initiates a particular kind of dialogue with a monk or someone belonging to another group or sect. A Debate is a formal intellectual confrontation in which one party challenges another in a contest of religious knowledge..

1. SERMONS.

Sermons can be distinguished by their introductory and concluding formulas and by their internal structure. They may comprise entire suttas, or they may be introduced within a sutta that begins as a Debate or Consultation. Entire suttas which through their opening and concluding formulas can be defined as Sermons are preached only to the monks. Sermons that are preached to persons who are not monks are contained only in Debates[5] and Consultations.[6] In these circumstances monks are always present as well.

1.1. The Standard Introductory Formulas for Sermons.

There are two formulas, one being an expansion of the other, which occur at the beginning of suttas and which define these suttas to be Sermons. These formulas appear only at the beginning of sermons. They therefore convey immediately to any audience the information that the

[5] DN 1; 2; 4; 5; 6; 7; 13. MN 30; 36; 41; 94; 135.
[6] MN 27; 105. There is one exceptional case, MN 53, where the Buddha instructs Ānanda to preach to the Sakyans.

the sutta about to be recited is a sermon. The introductory formulas follow the standard "*Evaṃ me sutaṃ*" and a brief statement of location.[7]

i. The simplest introductory formula.

This is:

1 "*Tatra kho Bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi 'Bhikkhavo' ti. 'Bhadante' ti te bhikkhū Bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etad avoca:*"[8]

The theme of the sermon is introduced in the opening sentence which follows the formula.

Instances:

DN suttas: 22; 26; 30; 33; 34.
Total = 5/34 = 14.7%.
MN suttas: 3; 5; 6; 7; 9; 10; 11; 15; 16; 19; 20; 25; 28; 33; 34; 39; 40; 45; 49; 64; 65; 70; 101; 102; 103; 106; 111; 112; 115; 116; 129; 130; 141.
Total = 33/152 = 21.71%.

ii. The expanded introductory formula.

This longer introductory formula is made up of three parts. It begins with the simplest introductory formula, "1" above. This is followed by the announcement of the theme in a standardised form, an

[7] This is an important point as one contributing feature in the definition of debates is their longer, more elaborate description of the location.
[8] "And there the Lord addressed the bhikkhus, saying 'Bhikkhus'. 'Revered Sir', those bhikkhus acknowledged him. The Lord spoke thus:"

injunction to the bhikkhus to listen and the acknowledgement of this injunction. The full expanded introductory formula is:

2 *"Tatra kho Bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi 'Bhikkhavo' ti. 'Bhadante' ti te bhikkhū Bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etad avoca:*
(Theme of sutta) *vo bhikkhave desessāmī ti. taṃ suṇātha sādhukaṃ manasikarotha, bhāsissāmī ti. Evam bhante ti kho te bhikkhū Bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etad avoca:"*[9]

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 1; 2; 17; 113; 114; 117; 120; 131; 137; 138; 139; 140[10]; 148; 149.
Total = 14/152 = 9.21%

1.2. Formulas that introduce Sermons in the middle of suttas.

Part of "2" occurs in the middle of suttas that have begun in some other way. It is the independent formula:

[9] "And there the Lord addressed the bhikkhus, saying 'Bhikkhus'. 'Revered Sir', those bhikkhus acknowledged him. The Lord spoke thus: 'I will teach you, bhikkhus, (theme of sermon). Listen to it, apply your minds well, I will speak'. 'Yes, Revered One', these bhikkhus acknowledged the Lord. The Lord spoke thus:"

[10] The formula is not completely standard here.

3 *tena hi* (name) *suṇātha sādhukaṃ manasikarotha, bhāsissāmī ti. Evam bhante ti kho (te bhikkhū) Bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etad avoca:*[11]

This formula therefore functions as a Sermon-marker, a cue in a sutta which indicates to the audience that what is about to follow will be a Sermon. "3" is preceded by certain standard formulas and expressions. These may be direct questions, or requests for teaching or for the expansion of a Sermon given in brief. "3" may also follow the announcement by the Buddha that he will teach. It may introduce a parable.

i. Direct Questions.

In some Debate Suttas, once the adversary has been reduced to asking the Buddha for an explanation,[12] "3" is a frequently used means of introducing the Buddha's answer.

Instances. .

DN suttas: 2 [i 62, § 39]; 4 [i 124, § 22]; 5 [i 134, § 9]; 6 [i 157, § 15]; 7 [i 159, § 1]; 13 [i 249, § 39]; 31 [iii 181 § 2].
MN suttas: 27; 54; 135.

[11] "'Listen to it, apply your minds well. I will speak'. 'Yes, Revered One', these bhikkhus acknowledged the Lord. The Lord spoke thus:"

[12] See below for an analysis of this category of sutta and especially for the importance of this type of situation.

ii. Requests for teaching or for expansions of Sermons given in brief.

Requests for Sermons or expansions of Sermons in brief seem to have been becoming formulaic, but not to have been distilled by the *bhāṇakas* (reciters) or by the redactors into one standard formula. This movement towards formula can be seen in the stereotyped use of certain words and phrases. Certain expressions are used when resorting to the Buddha himself (MN 41; 42; 135: "4" below), a different expression is used when resorting to the senior monk Mahā-Kaccāna (MN 18; 133: "5" below), and yet another when resorting to the monk Udena (MN 94 [ii 161,17-19]). These expressions are then followed by formula "3". They are frequently preceded by expressions of flattery directed towards the recipient of the request.[13]

The formula for addressing the Buddha is:

4 *Na kho mayaṃ imassa bhoto Gotamassa saṅkhittena bhāsitassa vitthārena atthaṃ avibhattassa vitthārena atthaṃ ājānāma; sādhu no bhavaṃ Gotamo tathā dhammaṃ desetu yathā mayaṃ imassa bhoto Gotamassa saṅkhittena bhāsitassa vitthārena atthaṃ avibhattassa vitthārena atthaṃ ājāneyyāmā ti.* [14]

Udena is approached with a simple version of this formula,[15] while Mahā-Kaccāna is addressed through the related formula:

[13] These are an interesting category of formula in their own right. They deserve their own study, and will not be discussed or quoted here.

[14] "We do not know the meaning in detail of what was said by the Lord Gotama in brief; we do not know the meaning in detail of what was not explained. Please let the Lord Gotama teach us that Teaching so that we may know the meaning in detail of what was spoken in brief by the Lord Gotama; so that we might know the meaning in detail of what was not explained." MN 41; 42; 135.

[15] MN 94 [ii 161,17-19].

5 *pahoti c' āyasmā Mahā-Kaccāno imassa Bhagavatā saṅkhittena uddesassa uddiṭṭhassa (vitthārena atthaṃ avibhattassa vitthārena) atthaṃ vibhajituṃ. Vibhajat' āyasmā Mahā-Kaccāno agarukaritvā ti*"[16]

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN 18; 41; 42; 94; 133; 135.

The further formula for addressing the Buddha:

6 *sādhu vata Bhagavantam yeva bho Gotamaṃ paṭibhātu etassa bhāsitassa attho, Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressantī ti,*[17]

followed by "3", also occurs.

Instances:

DN suttas: DN 4 [i 124].
MN suttas: 3; 9; 46; 47; 68; 122 [iii 115].

There is also the simple formula

7 *sādhu me ... desetu*[18]

[16] "Mahā-Kaccāno is able to go into in detail regarding the meaning of the exposition set out by the Lord in brief; he is able to go into in detail regarding the meaning of what was not explained. Mahā-Kaccāno explains without being inconvenienced." MN 18; 24-27; 133.

[17] "Please, Sir, let the Lord explain the meaning of what was said. When they have heard (it) from the Lord the bhikkhus will remember (it)."

[18] "Please teach me ... ."

Instances:

DN suttas: 5 [i 134]; 13 [i 249].
MN suttas: 73.

There is also the non-standardised form,

Sādhu maṃ, bhante, Bhagavā saṃkhittena ovādena ovadatu ...,[19] MN 145.

The standard phrases in these sermon requests are particularly *sādhu no ... desetu* "please teach us"

Instances:

DN suttas: 5 [i 134]; 13 [i 249].
MN suttas: 41; 42; 73; 94; 135.

and *sādhu paṭibhātu* "please let come to your mind".

Instances:

DN suttas: 4 [i 124].
MN suttas: 3; 9; 46; 47; 68; 76 [i 514,24-28].

Further there is the expression of encouragement from the monks to the Buddha which indicates their readiness to hear a Sermon:

8 *"Etassa Bhagavā kālo, etassa Sugata kālo, yaṃ bhagavā ... dhammiṃ kathaṃ kareyya, Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressantī ti."*[20]

[19] "Please let the Lord instruct me with brief instructions ... ."
[20] "The Lord should teach dhamma. It is the appropriate time for this, Lord. It is the appropriate time for this, Well-come One. When the monks have heard the Lord, they will remember (his words)."

Instances:

DN suttas: 14.
MN suttas: 51; 64; 105; 136; 152.

iii. Instructions to preach.

Instructions to preach rather self-evidently introduce Sermons. The terminology used in these is similar to that used in requests for sermons. The verb pāṭibhāti is standard, and the expression dhammī kathā rather common.

9 *Paṭibhātu taṃ ...* [21]

Instances:

DN: 33 [iii 209].
MN: 53 [i 354,21-26]; 123.

In the *Nandakovāda Sutta* no theme is introduced and the Buddha simply instructs Nandaka to give a sermon to the nuns in these words: *Ovāda, Nandaka, bhikkhuniyo. ... karohi tvaṃ, brāhmaṇa, bhikkhunīnaṃ dhammikathan ti (MN 146).*[22]

iv. Introducing a parable.

The formula "3" may also may be also used to introduce a simile or a parable in the middle of a sutta that is not a sermon.

[21] "Let come to your mind, ..."
[22] "Instruct the nuns, Nandaka. Provide them with a sermon."

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 27 (a Debate); 65 (a Consultation).

1.3. Expressions that may introduce Sermons.

Certain terms and expressions may introduce Sermons. Because their use is not consistent these cannot be considered invariably to be Sermon markers. Nevertheless they require mention here.

i. The question "What were you talking about?" as a Sermon marker.

A conventional means of introducing the Buddha to the main stage used in these suttas is to have him come up to a group of monks or religious practitioners of other persuasions and to ask them what they are talking about.

10 *Kāya nu 'ttha bhikkhave etarahi kathāya sannisinnā, kā ca pana vo antarākathā vippakatā ti* (MN 26 [i 161]).[23]

This is a challenging question. The type of sutta it introduces depends on the answer given. When the monks are thus addressed they answer with the subject of their discourse, and the Buddha immediately begins a Sermon. When others who are not monks (and who usually are *paribbājakas* of whatever kind) are thus addressed they evade the question and instead pose another, and the sutta develops into a Debate.[24]

[23] "As you were sitting down just now, what was your talk about, monks? What was your talk that was interrupted?"
[24] See section on Debate below.

Instances where sermons are thus introduced:

DN suttas: 14
MN suttas: 26, 76, 119, 123.

ii. The expression "*dhammi kathā*" as a Sermon marker.

The expression *dhammi kathā* may be used when a sermon is requested (DN 33; MN 76 [i 514]; 146 [iii 270]). There are, however, no regular or formulaic connecting phrases. This expression is used generally for the Buddha's discourse and occasionally for the discourse of monks too.

iii. The verb "*āmanteti*" as a Sermon marker.

The verb *āmanteti* occurs in both the simple and the extended introductory formulas. It is standard too when the Buddha speaks to the monks. The phrase:

11 *Atha kho Bhagavā ... bhikkhū/(name of bhikkhu) āmantesi*:[25]

which forms part of both introductory formulas may on its own introduce a Sermon.

Instances:

DN suttas: 32 [iii. 206].
MN suttas: 21 [i 124]; 29; 48 [i 322,5]; 53 [i 354,31]; 67 [i 459]; 69;

[25] "And then the Lord addressed the monk/(name of monk) ... ."

This phrase appears also in the following variant form:

12 *Atha kho Bhagavā tuṇhibhūtaṃ tuṇhibhūtaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ anuviloketvā bhikkhū āmantesi.*[26]

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 110 [iii 21]; 118 [iii 79, 80].

1.4. The internal structure of a Sermon.

Sermons define themselves also by their internal structure, which is simple and unvarying. The subject of the Sermon will be proposed either as a statement or as a question. The Sermon will then be developed methodically either through the expansion of a series of statements or through the expositions to a series of rhetorical questions. Sermons are not usually interrupted. Where there are rhetorical questions within a Sermon it is extremely unusual for these to be answered by the monks. This is a feature that clearly distinguishes Sermons from Consultations[27]: Sermons are most usually monologues, Consultations are most usually dialogues.

Instances of Sermons in which rhetorical questions are answered:

DN Sermons: none.
MN Sermons: 105; 106; 110; 119; 129
Total = 5/57 = 8.77%.

[26] "And then the Lord, surveying the completely silent community of monks, addressed the monks:"
[27] See below for the discussion of this category of sutta.

1.5. Concluding formulas.

i. The standard concluding formula.

The standard concluding formula is completely regular and unvarying except for the names it contains. These vary because sermons are not invariably given by the Buddha and the audience is not invariably, although most usually it is, "bhikkhus" in general.

The standard conclusion to a sermon is an acknowledgement by the monks or by one particular monk in the following form (the words in brackets being those that change):

13 *Idam avoca (Bhagavā). Attamanā (te bhikkhū) Bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandun ti.*[28]

Instances:

DN suttas: 1; 14; 22; 26; 32; 33 and 34.
MN suttas: 1-3; 6; 9-11; 15-21; 25; 26; 28-30; 33; 39; 40; 45-48; 51; 53; 64; 65; 67; 68; 70; 101-103; 105; 106; 110-115; 117-120; 122; 123; 129; 131; 133; 134; 136-139; 141; 145; 146; 148; 149; 152.

A variation of this concluding formula with compounds of the verbs "*bhāsati*" and "*abhinandati*" is also found.

14 *Itiha te. ubho mahānāgā aññamaññassa subhāsitaṃ samanumodiṃsū ti.*[29]

[28] "Thus spoke the Lord. Delighted these monks rejoiced in what the Lord had said." (tr. MLS I 8).
[29] "In this wise did each of these great beings rejoice together in what was well spoken by the other." (tr. MLS I 40).

217 /3

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 5. (See also under Consultations.)

Occasionally a concluding formula is followed by a statement that a monk or a group of monks has attained a particular stage.

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 147; 148.

ii. The Concluding formula when suttas end in verses.

When a sutta is concluded with verses, these are introduced by the following concluding formula:

15 *Idam avoca Bhagavā, idaṃ vatvā Sugato athāparaṃ etad avoca Satthā:*[30]

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 34; 130; 142.

2. DEBATES.

A sutta can be defined as a Sermon on the grounds of its opening and closing formulas and its internal structure. The criteria that permit a sutta to be defined as a Debate include some formulas, but for the most part it is the features of certain suttas that permit their definition as Debates.

[30] "Thus spoke the Lord; the Well-farer having said this, the Teacher then spoke thus:" (tr. MLS 1 279).

A sutta can be categorised as a Debate when it has at least the following features: two opponents, viz., the Buddha or a senior monk, and an adversary; a challenge; a refutation; and an admission of defeat.[31] These may be regarded as the major features of the Debate suttas. Other features which may be regarded as minor, but which are not unimportant, are usually present and many of these are formularised. The formulas are often extremely long[32] and so not all of them will be quoted below, nor, as these are minor features, will every location where a particular formula or feature appears be given.

There are three types of debate: (I) the dramatic debate: this is recounted as it goes along; (II) the reported debate: this is a debate that has taken place in the past and which the Buddha is recounting on a later occasion; (III) the debate with hypothetical opponents: here the views of certain general groups, "*samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas*" are disputed. As a genre of literature the Dramatic Debate is, as the word suggests, a drama. It is the occasion when religous leaders put each others' knowledge and prestige to the test in public. Everything is to be won or lost.[33] In the texts, individual speeches are recorded so that the development and the course of the argument can be followed verbatim. Sometimes the reaction of the audience is recorded and this serves to heighten the drama. Reported Debates have similar immediacy: the Buddha is recounting a previous Dramatic Debate. They are, however, less exciting. The element of contest in a Reported Debate is neither so pronounced nor so important as in a Dramatic Debate. Its outcome is already known. Debates with hypothetical opponents are occasions where wrong views are criticised and right views expounded by the Buddha. They serve a philosophical and didactic purpose.

[31] See Witzel, 1987, for some comparisons between the rules of discussion, of challenge and of defeat in Vedic and in Pali literature.
[32] for example the formula on brahman virtues in DN 4 [i 113 foll.].
[33] Witzel, 1987, 307.

The dramatic debate shows most clearly the sequence of features of the Debate suttas.

I. THE DRAMATIC DEBATE.

i. The description of the Location.

Where the introduction to a Sermon is a brief record of the place in which it was given, the description of the location in a Debate sutta is usually given more importance. It is more elaborate and details are specified. This is because its function is to set the scene and create the atmosphere for a drama. Thus if the Buddha's opponent is a rich brahman the beauty and wealth of his domain is described,[34] or we may be told that a location just happened to contain at that time a number of brahmans.[35] Where the opponent is another wanderer less importance is given to the location.

ii. The presentation of the opponents and their credentials.

As a Debate is a drama it is important in the presentation of the characters to establish the worth of the adversaries from the outset. Especially, as these Debates are recounted by the Buddhists, the Buddha's prestige and the importance of the debate that will follow are enhanced by the prestige and importance of his adversary. There are standard ways of introducing and demonstrating the prestige of the different types of adversaries and, equally, there are standard ways of showing that the Buddha's prestige equals their own. These standard ways are (a) to show the social status of the adversary, (b) to demonstrate his knowledge, (c)

[34] DN 3; 4; 5. MN 95.
[35] DN 6; 13. MN 98.

to describe the size of his following, (d) to show the respect with which he greets the Buddha.

a. The social status of the adversary.

The social status of the adversary is an important feature especially where the opponent is a brahman or a king (kṣatriya) and it is emphasised by the inclusion of many details. Where the adversary is an important brahman the richness of his domain and the importance of his king-patron is emphasised at the beginning of the account of the Debate, where this feature forms part of the scene-setting (Location). The elaborate procession in which this type of adversary may approach the Buddha is often described.[36]

By promoting the high social status of the adversary the texts prove that the Buddha is held in high esteem by this class of people.

b. The knowledge and attainments of the adversaries.

The news of the Buddha's arrival in a particular area is announced in a formula that describes both the size of his following (see. c. below) and the extent of his knowledge and attainments:

16 *"Taṃ kho pana bhavantaṃ Gotamaṃ evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato: 'Iti pi so Bhagavā arahaṃ sammā-sambuddho vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno sugato loka-vidū anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi satthā deva-manussānaṃ buddho bhagavā.' So imaṃ lokaṃ sadevakaṃ samārakaṃ sabrahmakaṃ sassamaṇa-brāhmaṇiṃ pajaṃ sadevamanussaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti. So dhammaṃ deseti ādi-kalyāṇaṃ majjhe kalyāṇaṃ pariyosāna-kalyāṇaṃ sāthaṃ savyañjanaṃ, kevala-paripuṇṇaṃ*

[36] DN 2; 3. MN 84.

parisuddhaṃ brahmacariyaṃ pakāseti. Sādhu kho pana tathā-rūpānaṃ arahataṃ dassanaṃ hotī ti."[37]

This formula occurs wherever the opponent is a brahman, although its use is not limited to these occasions[38], nor to the Debate situation. The response to this formula by the brahman to whose domain the Buddha has come is either that he decides to visit the Buddha, or that he sends a student (*antevāsī*).

There are two formulas for describing the highest state of brahman knowledge, a very long one[39] and a short one. I quote only the short one:

17 *... ajjhāyako mantadharo tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū sanighaṇḍu-keṭubhānaṃ sākkharappabhedānaṃ itihāsa-pañcamānaṃ padako veyyākaraṇo lokāyata-mahāpurisa-lakkhaṇesu anavayo ...* [40]

[37] "Now regarding that venerable Gotama, such is the high reputation that has been noised abroad : — That Blessed One is an Arahat, a fully awakened one, abounding in wisdom and goodness, happy, with knowledge of the worlds, unsurpassed as a guide to mortals willing to be led, a teacher for gods and men, a Blessed One a Buddha. He, by himself, thoroughly knows and sees, as it were, face to face this universe, — including the worlds above of the gods, the Brahmas, and the māras, and the world below with its recluses and Brahmans, its princes and peoples, — and having known it, he makes his knowledge known to others. The truth, lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation, doth he proclaim both in the spirit and in the letter, the higher life doth he make known, in all its fullness and in all its purity. And good is it to pay visits to Arahats like that." (tr. DB I 109).
DN 2 [i 49] (abbreviated version); 3 [i 87]; 5 [i 127 foll.]. MN 41; 60; 75; 91; 92; 95.

[38] In the *Sela Sutta*, MN 92, this statement of attributes is communicated to Keṇiya, the matted-haired ascetic.

[39] DN 4 [i 113 foll.]; 5 [i 137]. MN 95.

[40] "He was a repeater (of the sacred words) knowing the mystic verses by heart, one who had mastered the Three Vedas, with the indices, the ritual, the phonology, and the exegesis (as a fourth), and the legends as a fifth, learned in the idioms and the grammar, versed in Lokāyata sophistry, and in the theory of the signs on the body of a great man ... DN 3 [i 88]. MN 93 [ii 147].

The short formula is most usual when the brahman sends one of his student to see the Buddha on his behalf. When, however, the brahman leader decides to go on his own account, there is a dramatic turn of events. His followers warn him that should he do that his own glory (*yasas*) will be diminished and that of the Buddha enhanced. They advise him rather to let the Buddha call upon him. They support this advice with the recitation of a long description of all the features that makes this man such a true brahman and such an important religious leader, and which make it, therefore, in every way inappropriate that he should be the one to pay the visit. This gives the brahman the opportunity to defend his proposed action, and to say that indeed the Buddha himself also possesses all of these brahman virtues.[41] This recognition that the Buddha receives from other religious leaders further serves in these texts to demonstrate the esteem in which he is held and his worthiness as an opponent.

c. The audience.

The description of the size of the following around each of the opponents is a frequent feature and its comportment serves to enhance, or otherwise, the importance of each adversary. The nature of audience is also a point. The respectful silence and concentration of large groups of monks is frequently contrasted with noise and gossip among the followings of the various wanderers.[42]

[41] DN 4; 5. MN 95.

[42] e.g. DN 2; 9. MN 77; 79.

d. The formal greeting between adversaries.

In these dramatic accounts the formal greeting between the adversaries is the final element in the scene-setting before the action of the Debate is begun.

The first encounter between the adversaries is an important moment in an event where the status of each is at stake. There are three degrees of formal greeting in the suttas: simple, elaborate and very elaborate. The simplest greeting is the monks' way of initiating communication with the Buddha. This simply consists of making a salutation and sitting to one side.

18 *bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi.*[43]

This does not occur in debates except as part of the ceremonious formal greeting (see below). Rather, in these are found either a formal greeting in which social pleasantries are indulged in, or a ceremonious formal greeting. The formal greeting which includes social pleasantries is expressed:

19 *Bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodi sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ sārāṇiyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi.*[44]

The ceremonious formal greeting occurs when the adversary is an important brahmin. In this case some among his large group of followers will use one or other of the above formal greetings besides which greetings such as bowing with joined palms, announcing name and clan, or simply remaining silent will occur.[45]

[43] "He saluted the Buddha and sat to one side." e.g. MN 8 (i 40); etc.
[44] "He exchanged with the Blessed One the greetings and compliments of politeness and courtesy, and took his seat on one side." (DB I, p. 152). e.g. DN 3, § 9; § 16; 4, § 9; 5, § 8. MN 30; 36; 56; etc.
[45] DN 5, § 8. MN 41; 42; 60.

20 *Atha kho Sāleyyakā brāhmaṇagahapatikā yena Bhagavā ten' upasaṅkaṇiṃsu, upasaṅkamitvā app-ekacce Bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu, app-ekacce Bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodiṃsu sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ sārāṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu, app-ekacce yena Bhagavā ten' añjaliṃ panāmetvā ekamantaṃ nisīsiṃsu, app-ekacce Bhagavato santike nāmagottaṃ sāvetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu, app-ekacce tuṇhī-bhūtā ekamantaṃ nisīdiṃsu.*[46]

Departures from these formal greetings make a point in the unfolding of the drama. The King Ajātasattu remains standing for a while in the Buddha's presence, expressing his thoughts about his son;[47] reasons of his own history stand between him and spiritual attainment. Ambaṭṭha, a brahman youth, rudely stands around and fidgets;[48] it later turns out that his geneology is not as truly brahmanic as he claims. Kassapa, the naked ascetic, remains standing;[49] this less than usually polite beginning makes his eventual complete conversion more prestigious.

The formal greeting is a means the texts use to characterise the adversary. It is also a way in which they demonstrate the Buddha's prestige. The Buddha receives a greeting as his tribute from an adversary who approaches him. On the occasions where he approaches his

[46] MN 41 (i 285). "Then the brahman householders of Sālā approached the Lord; some, having approached, having greeted the Lord, sat down at a respectful distance; some exchanged greetings with the Lord; having exchanged greetings of friendliness and courtesy, they sat down at a respectful distance; some, having saluted the Lord with joined palms, sat down at a respectful distance; some, having made known their names and clans in the Lord's presence, sat down at a respectful distance; some, becoming silent, sat down at a respectful distance." (tr. MLS I 343).
[47] DN 2, § 12.
[48] DN 3, § 9.
[49] DN 8, § 1.

adversary, there is no formal greeting. Instead the Buddha begins with the challenging question, "What were you talking about ?"[50] In contrast to the monks who always answer this question and then receive a Sermon, the adversary and his group will avoid giving an answer, asking instead their own challenging question.[51]

iii. The challenge, the refutation and the defeat.

The challenge, the refutation and the defeat in the Buddhist debates conform to the same rules, allowing for the difference in situation, as that in the brahmanical debates.[52]

a. The challenge.

The challenge comes in the form of a question. It starts the discussion.

The rules for the challenge are that "two or more persons ... challenge each other to answer certain questions of a ritual or spiritual nature; or one man is challenged by a group of others. This may occur in a private or in (a) public situation ... ".[53] In the Buddhist scriptures usually the Buddha is challenged by an adversary but there are also frequent occasions where he issues the challenge himself.

The type of question that may be asked is also defined. "Normally only well-known — though technically complicated — questions are allowed ... ", and in passages that do not involve a

[50] See "10" above.
[51] e.g. DN 9; MN 77.
[52] The way the Debates are conducted shows that certain "general rules of discussion, rules of challenge and defeat" existed. See Witzel, 1987, 373, 381 foll. In the Buddhist debates there were other specified standards to be kept to as well. See Manné, "The Dīgha Nikāya Debates: Debating practices at the time of the Buddha as demonstrated in the Pāli Canon" (forthcoming in *Buddhist Studies Review*).
[53] Witzel, 1987, 360.

brahmodya or ritual discussion, " ... the questioning concerns the proper procedure or ritual and its secret, esoteric meaning ... ".[54] or there may be questions concerning other "esoteric, secret knowledge, be it *ātman, brahman* or about the *dhamma* (or simply a secret, as in the case of the origin of the clan of Ambaṭṭha which is known only to him and a few others)."[55]

It would serve no purpose in this article to list all the challenges in the Buddhist Debate suttas. The example of Ambaṭṭha's secret has already been given. Here are some others, chosen at random. In the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (DN 5), the Buddha is asked how to perform a successful sacrifice. In the *Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta* (MN 72), the Buddha's views are challenged. In the *Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta* (MN 107), the Buddha's training and its effects are queried. The first (DN 5) is an example of a question of a ritual nature; the others are challenges of a spiritual nature.

b. The refutation.

There are rules too regarding the refutation. It is expecially the case that "mere brazen assertion does not suffice; one must be able to prove one's knowledge".[56]

A contestant cannot avoid a challenge, "one must answer at the third time the question is put ... — one must answer completely, not only partially, — if one does not/cannot answer, death is imminent."[57] The contestant must either answer or admit insufficient knowledge. If one of these conditions is not fulfilled the contestant suffers the ominous threat of death through the splitting of his head.[58]

[54] Witzel, 1987, 374.
[55] Witzel, 1987, 410.
[56] Witzel, 1987, 373.
[57] Witzel, 1987, 408. See also ibid. p. 371.
[58] Witzel, 1987, 375. Witzel provides further conditions under which this threat may arise.

These conditions point to just how daring the Buddha was to create and justify a category of questions that remained unexplained — *avyākata*.[59]

In terms of literature, the refutations are very lively, containing many strategies, twists and turns which contribute to the drama of the situation.

c. The defeat.

The rule for the Vedic debates is that "in the course of the discussion participants who do not know the whole truth have to state this clearly, they must cease questioning ... and thus declare defeat, ... or they must become a pupil of the winner"[60] This rule is also followed in the Buddhist texts. The participant who is forced in the course of the debate to admit that he does not know the whole truth stops putting challenging questions and instead is reduced to asking the Buddha to explain the matter to him. In this way he acknowledges that he is defeated.

There is a consequence of conceding defeat: "conceding defeat in a discussion has, of course, the social effect of clearly stated and admitted superiority, of gaining and losing 'face' among one's fellow brahmins and in the tribe at large".[61] This forms part of the drama in the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta*[62] which makes much of Soṇadaṇḍa's fears that the Buddha might put to him a challenging question that he would not be able to answer.[63]

[59] See Warder, 137–50 for a discussion of the philosophical implications of such a category of questions.
[60] Witzel, 1987, 371. See also his discussion of the threat that the adversary's head will burst.
[61] Witzel, 1987, 373.
[62] DN 4 [i 119, §§ 10–11].
[63] The situation in this sutta suggests that debates between religious leaders of different persuasions were inevitable when they met each other, and that they could not avoid such a meeting without losing their self-respect and the respect of their following.

There are two degrees of defeat in the Buddhist debate suttas. The first may be designated "formal" defeat. In this case the opponent aknowledges the Buddha's superiority and asks to become a lay disciple. The second degree of defeat is total conversion: the opponent asks to become a bhikkhu. Both degrees of defeat are expressed in formulas. These formulas reflect the degree of commitment with regard to becoming a pupil. The formulas begin:

21 *"Abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama, abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama. Seyyathā pi bho Gotama nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya, paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya, mūḷhassa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya, andhakāre vā tela-pajjotaṃ dhāreyya: 'cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhintī ti', evam eva bhotā Gotamena aneka-pariyāyena dhammo pakāsito. Esāhaṃ Bhagavantaṃ Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi dhammañ ca bhikkhu-saṃghañ ca, ..."*[64]

The formula for "formal" defeat continues:

22 *upāsakaṃ maṃ bhavaṃ Gotamo dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gataṃ.*[65]

[64] "Most excellent, oh Gotama (are the words of thy mouth), most excellent! Just as if a man were to set up that which has been thrown down, or were to reveal that which has been hidden away, or were to point out the right road to him who has gone astray, or were to bring a light into the darkness so that those who had eyes could see external forms — just even so has the truth been made known to me, in many a figure, by the venerable Gotama." (tr. DB I 157).
[65] "May the venerable Gotama accept me as a lay-disciple, as one who, from this day forth and as long as I may live, has gone for refuge."

223/2

Instances:

DN suttas: 2; 3; 4; 5; 10; 12; 13; 14; 23; 31.
MN suttas: 27; 41; 58; 60; 72; 73; 74; 80; 84; 85; 91; 92; 93 (brief: see fn. in translation); 94; 95; 96; 97; 99; 100; 102; 135; 150.

The formula that acknowledges total conversion including the request to be accepted as a monk is:

23 *Labheyyāhaṃ bhante-Bhagavato santike pabbajjaṃ, labheyyaṃ upasampadan ti.*[66]

Instances:

DN suttas: 8; 9; 14.
MN suttas: 7; 75; 79; 92; 124.

These formulas close the Debate.

iv. The reward.

Two types of reward are concomitant upon winning the debate. The first, which is a consistent feature of the Debate suttas, is the acquisition of prestigious converts: the opponent and his following, whether as lay-disciples or as monks. It is expressed through the formulas above.

The second type of reward is a less consistent feature. Admissions of defeat are sometimes followed by an invitation to a meal. This is most usual when the adversary is a brahman, but occurs also when the adversary is a Jain.

[66] "And may I be permitted to go forth from the world under the Exalted One; may I receive admission into his Order." (tr. DB I 264).

Instances:

DN suttas: 3; 4; 5.
MN suttas: 35 — this invitation comes from a Jain; 91.

The importance of each type of reward to a group of religieux who rely on the lay population for their bodily survival is rather evident.

Instances of Dramatic Debates.

DN suttas: 2 - 13; 23; 25; 31.
Total = 15 = 44.12%
MN suttas: 7; 27; 35; 36; 55; 56; 58; 60; 72-77; 79; 80; 82; 84; 90-96; 99; 100; 107; 108; 124; 152.
Total = 31 = 20.4%

II. The Reported Debate.

The Reported Debate is an account of a Debate that has taken place in the past. It has the same major features as a Dramatic Debate: two opponents, a challenge, a refutation, and a defeat; but there are differences in their expression in the texts. With regard to the opponents in this type of Debate, one is always the Buddha:[67] in the Dramatic Debates the representative of the Buddhist position might be the Buddha himself or a senior monk. The challenges and their refutations in this type of Debate are reported in direct speech as in the Dramatic Debates and conform to the same requirements. The defeat in these Debates is related by the Buddha as part of the account rather than being expressed by the opponent directly through the formulas "21", "22" and "23". It is always

[67] There are many occasions where monks, having been involved in a debate, report the discussion to the Buddha to find out what they should have said, or whether they answered correctly. On these occasions it is the *consultation* of the Buddha by the monk that is the defining feature of the sutta, not the Debate. This type of sutta will be dealt with in the following section.

a defeat in terms of the argument of the refutation, and there is no conversion to the Buddha's Teaching.

Many of the minor features are omitted in these Debates. There is no presentation of the opponents and their credentials, no mention of their social status, their knowledge and attainments, the size of their following, or the formal greeting between them and the Buddha. There is also no mention of any reward.

A Reported Debate may form the basis of a Sermon.

Instances:

DN suttas: 24
MN suttas: 14 (recounted within a Consultation), 49, 101

III. THE DEBATE WITH POTENTIAL OPPONENTS.

A general feature of many suttas is a paragraph in which an idea or set of ideas of a group with which the Buddha disagrees in general or who may generally disagree with him, are set forth by him, and then the correct position, the Buddha's own, is given. Alternatively, the Buddha may simply contrast himself with these groups, for example, as in the *Bhayabherava Sutta,* MN 4. A few suttas, however, are entirely devoted to disputing a particular idea set forth in this way and these satisfy the criteria for Debate Suttas. In this type of Debate Sutta the Buddha provides both the opponents, the challenge and the refutation. The opponents may be regarded as potential adversaries. They comprise either the rather general group of "wanderers of other sects", *aññatitthiyā paribbājakā,* or that of "some *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas*", ***eke samaṇabrāhmaṇā;*** or the opponent is the *puthujjana,* the "Ordinary Man", i.e. the general representative of the group who have not undertaken any training. The challenge consists of the Buddha's exposition of beliefs which he attributes to a potential adversary. The refutation comprises the

Buddha's arguments against the position of the potential adversary as he has portrayed it.

This type of debate may be placed within Sermon introductory and concluding formulas, in which case it only contains the minimum of Debate features:

Instances:

DN sutta: 1.
MN sutta: 102,

or it may be set out as a Dramatic Debate, with several of the minor formulas, such as that expressing the Buddha's credentials, the elaborate greeting ceremony, and the conversion formula which acknowledges defeat:

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 60, 150 (samaṇas and brāhmaṇas), 74 (a debate with a wanderer, but the argument is generally directed against samaṇas and brāhmaṇas).

IV. THE REFUSED DEBATE.

There are two occasions where a sutta begins as if it were going to be a Dramatic Debate, and then the Buddha (MN 30) or the monk concerned (MN 125) refuses to take up the challenge. In these cases the Buddha offers a Sermon instead. The monk, however, simply refuses to be questioned with regard to the explanation he has given or will give.

Instances:

DN suttas: 31.
MN suttas: 30; 125.

225/3

A challenge issued by the Buddha may also be refused. In the *Sigālovāda Sutta*, DN 31, the householder Sigāla does not respond to the Buddha's challenge with an assertion of his own position. Instead he asks for information and is rewarded with a Sermon. Although the question asked is typical of a Consultation the sutta ends with the Debate conversion formula for lay-discipleship. The internal structure of the sutta, however, shows that it is a Sermon as there are no interruptions.

V. SUTTAS THAT TEACH DEBATE AND REFUTATION.

Certain suttas teach strategies of debate and refutation. These suttas do not necessarily simply fall into the category of Debates, as the table of instances below shows. In the *Cūḷasīhanāda Sutta* (MN 11) and in the *Nagaravindeyya Sutta* (MN 150) the Buddha initiates these instructions. In the first case he is instructing his monks, and in the second some brahman householders on how to refute a challenge that wanderers of other sects (*aññatitthiyā paribbājakā*) might make. In the *Mahā-dukkhakkhandha Sutta* (MN 13) monks who had been challenged by other wanderers and who had been unable to answer the challenge go to the Buddha to have the matter explained.

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 11 (a Sermon); 13 (a Debate); 150 (a Debate).

VI. THE DEBATES BETWEEN THE BUDDHA AND A MONK, OR BETWEEN MONKS.

There are occasions where the Buddha challenges the superlative claims a senior monk has made about the Buddha himself or about his

Teaching. In this kind of Debate it is the Buddha who is defeated. He then has to acknowledge that the monk's superlative claims were justified.

Instances:

DN suttas: 28 (Sāriputta)
MN suttas: none.

There is one occasion, the *Rathavinīta Sutta* (MN 24) where one senior monk, Sāriputta, challenges another, Puṇṇa, on a point of the Buddha's Teaching to check if the reputation of the other is warranted. This suggests that monks debated with each other to challenge each other's understanding of the Teaching, and perhaps also to enhance their own prestige.

3. CONSULTATIONS.

A sutta can be categorised as a Consultation when the Buddha or a senior monk is resorted to for information or advice. Most usually the person doing the consulting is a monk but there are also occasions where he is a member of a different sect or group. A sutta is also a Consultation when the Buddha himself, or a senior monk, initiates the conversation.

Consultations have features in common with both Sermons and Debates.

A Consultation may be introduced in the same way as a Sermon, with minimal scene-setting: just a simple statement of the location and the brief introduction by name and social group (monk, brahman, householder, etc.) of the person who is consulting the Buddha, or it may be introduced in the same way as a Debate, with elaborate scene-setting including the description of some event or the recounting of some anecdote.

The formal greeting in a Consultation is almost always the simplest.[68] It is made both by monks and by others (gahapati, MN 52; Licchavis, MN 105; etc.). The very few exceptions where the more elaborate formal greeting is used occur when the person making the Consultation is a brahman or an ascetic.

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 4; 52; 57; 97; 98.

A Consultation begins with a question. When a monk consults the Buddha or the Buddha initiates some interaction with a monk, there is no problem with regard to categorising the sutta as a Consultation. Where, however, someone who is not a monk approaches the Buddha and asks him a question there are criteria through which this type of question and the question that forms the challenge of a Debate can be distinguished. One is, rather self-evidently, the nature of the question; another is the nature of the questioner's response to the Buddha's answer. In a Debate the Buddha's answer to the challenge is argued against as part of the debating procedure; in a Consultation, the Buddha's answer is invariably accepted. Further questions may be asked, but a different position is never put forward.

The procedure of a Consultation is that it may take the form of a dialogue, or the Buddha may respond with a Sermon. The Sermon may be introduced by the usual formula for the introduction of a Sermon in the middle of a sutta ("3"), or it may be evident because of the structure of the passage (see Internal Sermon Structure 1.5, above).

A Consultation ends most usually with the same closing formula as a Sermon. There are, however, instances where a Consultation ends with the concluding formula that acknowledges defeat

[68] See Section ii.d. under Dramatic Debates.

in a Debate ("21" and "22", or "23"). Such occasions can only occur where the person consulting is not a monk, i.e. he is not already a convert. These instances suggest that however innocent the question may seem, one may always suspect some proximity to a Debate when the Buddha is consulted by someone who is not a monk, and when the sutta ends in a defeat formula. In this type of sutta there is often reference to potential adversaries, even when the reference is sudden and intrusive and unconnected with the main theme of the sutta (e.g. the *Bhayabherava Sutta*, MN 4).

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 4 (*upāsaka*); 57 (*upāsaka, paribbājaka*); 73 (*upāsaka*); 98 (*upāsaka*).

Consultations fall into distinct categories. Where the Buddha, or a senior monk, is consulted these include requests for teaching, requests for guidance with the practice, requests for the approval of the Buddha for some other monk's exposition of his Teaching. Where it is the Buddha, or senior monk, who initiates the interaction, this may be in order to check the progress of the other, to drill the other in the Teaching, or to reprimand the other.

3.1. In the following categories the Buddha is consulted.

i. Requests for clarification regarding the Teaching.

This is the largest category of Consultation.[69] In this type of Consultation a monk or a non-Buddhist (brahman, householder, etc.) goes

[69] As suttas frequently contain different types of Consultation, I am where necessary giving both page and line numbers in this section.

227/13

goes to the Buddha for information regarding the Teaching. This may be a simple request for general information[70] or it may be in order to attain clarity on a particular aspect of the teaching.[71] Clarification might similarly be sought regarding the meaning of a parable,[72] claims made about the Buddha's capacities and conduct,[73] or the relationship between the Buddha's qualities and those of other monks.[74] There is also a request for information about the consequences of attainments,[75] and a request for the Buddha's judgment on the best kind of monk.[76] Further, the Buddha is consulted on the authenticity of some monk's claims to high attainment.[77]

Various people and beings — monks, non-monks, yakkhas — may ask each other if they remember a particular discourse.[78] They may request from each other expositions in detail of Sermons given in brief by the Buddha. In these cases, the consultation is simply the means to introduce a Sermon.[79]

[70] E.g the *Aṭṭhakanāgara Sutta*, MN 52; the *Anuruddha Sutta*, MN 127.

[71] E.g. the *Cūḷaṭaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta*, MN 37; the *Mahāvedalla Sutta*, MN 43; the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta*, MN 44 [i 304,26]; the *Bahuvedanīya Sutta*, MN 59; the *Āṇañjasappāya Sutta*, MN 106 [This is a consultation based on a point made in a Sermon. The sutta therefore contains both a Sermon, and the ensuing discussion: a Consultation]; the *Mahāpuṇṇama Sutta*, MN 109; the *Bahudhātuka Sutta*, MN 115; the *Cūḷasuññata Sutta*, MN 121; the *Mahākammavibhaṅga Sutta*, MN 136.

[72] E.g. the *Vammika Sutta*, MN 23.

[73] E.g. the *Tevijja-Vacchagotta Sutta*, MN 71 [i 482]; the *Bāhitika Sutta*, MN 88.

[74] The *Gopakamoggallāna Sutta*, MN 108. This consultation becomes a debate.

[75] The *Tevijja-Vacchagotta Sutta*, MN 71 [i 483].

[76] The *Mahāgosiṅga Sutta*, MN 32.

[77] The *Sunakkhatta Sutta*, MN 105.

[78] The *Mahākaṇṇakīnabhaddekaratta Sutta*, MN 133 [iii 192]; the *Lomasakaṅgiya-bhaddekaratta Sutta*, MN 134 [iii 199].

[79] E.g. the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, MN 18; the *Mahākaccānabhaddekaratta Sutta*, MN 133 [iii 194].

Instances:

DN suttas: none
MN suttas — monk: 18; 23; 32; 37; 43; 44; 59; 63; 81; 83; 104; 109; 115; 121; 133; 134; 136.
— other: 52; 57; 71; 73; 78; 88; 98; 105; 108; 127.

ii. Requests for guidance with the practice.

These rare suttas may perhaps offer authentic information regarding some of the problems encountered by those practising the Buddha's method. There are requests for guidance on practical problems, such as the problem of getting rid of particular ideas (the *Sallekha Sutta*, MN 8), or coping with the problem of personal greed (the *Cūḷadukkhakkhandha Sutta*, MN 14).

iii. Requests for confirmation that the Buddha agrees with some other monk's exposition of his Teaching.

The Buddha may be consulted as to whether or not he agrees with some other monk's exposition of his Teaching (the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta*, MN 44 [i 304], or a monk may himself check that he has correctly explained the Teaching (the Bhūmija Sutta, 46).

iv. A monk consults the Buddha on a challenge.

These are the occasions where a monk has been challenged but has been unable to respond and to enter a debate. The monk then consults the Buddha on the correct answer. In the *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta*, MN 12, the Buddha's response is the same type of bravura exposition as occurs in a dramatic Debate, including both an assertion of his attainments and a demonstration of his knowledge.

Instances

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 12; 13;[80] 78.

v. The Buddha's opinion is sought variously.

The Buddha's opinion is sought on various subjects: two ascetics ask about their likely fate after death (the *Kukkuravatika Sutta*, MN 57); the brahmans Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja ask the Buddha to settle their discussion on how one is a brahman (the *Vāseṭṭha Sutta*, MN 98); Ānanda asks how the order can be protected from breaking into disputes after the Buddha's death (the *Sāmagāma Sutta*, MN 104).

Instances

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 57; 98; 104.

3.2. In the following categories the Buddha initiates the consultation.

vi. Progress is checked.

This type of Consultation in which the Buddha personally checks a monk's progress presents an interesting aspect of his teaching activities. This sort of checking is not limited to junior monks: in the *Piṇḍapātapārisuddhi Sutta* (MN 151) the Buddha checks Sāriputta's progress; nor is it limited to monks: in the *Dhānañjāni Sutta* (MN 97), Sāriputta checks the practice and progress of the brahman Dhānañjāni.

[80] This sutta teaches Debate strategy. See Section V under Debates.

Instances.

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 31; 68; 97; 128 [iii 155];[81] 151.

vii. The Buddha drills a monk (the monks) in the Teaching.

In this type of Consultation the Buddha drills a monk or a group of the monks to make sure that they have grasped an aspect of his Teaching. Here again it is not only the ordinary monks who are drilled. Sāriputta and Moggallāna too are subjected to this form of treatment (*Cāuma Sutta*, MN 67)

Instances

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 22 [i 133]; 38 [i 258]; 67.

viii. The Buddha reprimands a monk.

This type of sutta is introduced by a tale-telling episode. Some monk tells the Buddha that the behaviour of another is unsatisfactory or that another is holding and proclaiming a wrong view. The Buddha is also told that a group of monks has become quarrelsome and he attempts to sort them out (*Kosambiya Sutta*, MN 48).

Instances:

DN suttas: none.
MN suttas: 21; 22 [i 132]; 38 [i 258]; 48; 70; 128 [i 253].

[81] The three suttas, MN 32, 68, 128 [iii 155], concern a group practising intensely together who are referred to collectively by the name of one of them as *Anuruddhas*.

229/3

ix. The Buddha teaches Rāhula.

It seems that the Buddha was particularly assiduous in his concern for Rahula's progress. In three suttas (the *Ambalaṭṭhikā-Rāhulovāda Sutta*, MN 61; the *Mahā-Rāhulovāda Sutta*, MN 62; the *Cūḷarāhulovāda Sutta*, MN 147) he goes to find Rāhula especially to teach him. These episodes of teaching take the form of Consultations.

x. The Buddha checks that a particular discourse has been given.

The Buddha is depicted as being particularly concerned that the discourse of the Auspicious (*bhaddekaratta*) should have been given (MN 132).

xi. Social Consultations.

It seems that visits to sick monks or followers were regularly requested and carried out. In the *Anāthapiṇḍikovāda Sutta* (MN 143) the householder Anāthapiṇḍika who is ill asks Sāriputta to call on him. In the *Channovāda Sutta* (MN 144) Sāriputta and Cunda decide to call on the monk Channa who is ill. In both cases there is a discussion with the sick person regarding how he is coping with his illness, and he is offered Teaching on how to sustain himself.

DISCUSSION

In this section the following issues will be discussed: (1) the authenticity of these categories; (2) the implications of these categories for our understanding of the Buddhist Teaching; (3) the implications of these categories for our understanding of the different purposes of Digha and Majjhima Nikāya; (4) the contribution of these categories with regard

to distinguishing textual units; and the relationship of the Buddha's times to our own.

1. The authenticity of these categories.

How far are the categories "Sermon", "Debate" and "Consultation" authentic ? Do these categories represent types of oral literature that go back to the time of the Buddha or must they be considered to be a convenient literary invention of the early monks and the redactors ?

Common sense supports the reasonableness of the categories "Sermon" and "Consultation". It seems hard to doubt that the Buddha, in his role of religious leader, preached Sermons and gave Consultations. This statement makes no claim that the existing material is an historically accurate record of the exact words and themes of the Sermons the Buddha preached or the exact words and themes of the Consultations that he gave.[82] It merely says that it is rather likely that he did both. This also means that it is difficult to suspect the redactors of having invented and created these forms. Whether or not they invented them, it is certain that they exploited them in the service of (their school of) the religion.[83]

The authenticity of the Debate as an old Indian genre of oral literature is not in question,[84] and the Buddhists may have needed some of these types of texts in order to compete with their existence in the Vedic

[82] I see no way of definitively distinguishing Buddha-style from *bhāṇaka*-style. Even a perfect collating back as far as possible using all the existing texts can never achieve this.

[83] Warder, who treats the different genres of literature in the Pali Canon according to the criteria of Sanskrit *kāvya* literature, says, "This canon, ... (includes) a substantial amount of poetry and some prose stories ... Though these are applied to propaganda purposes, they are clearly adaptations or applications of the techniques of the secular poetry and story-telling of their day ... " (§ 536). Warder (§ 608) includes in his category "story-telling" suttas that are here categorised as debates, e.g. the *Pāyāsi Sutta*, DN 23.

[84] Witzel, 1987, 385.

texts. They may have needed to present their religious leader the way that the brahman sages were represented: as a champion of debate in order to enhance his credibility.[85] Although the redactors of the Buddhist texts cannot be accredited with the invention of this genre the accounts of some of these Debates are such wonderful stories that one may suspect the improving tendencies of a series of good raconteurs.

A further fact that supports the authenticity of the categories Sermon, Consultation and Debate is their consistency throughout the Nikayas. This study has been based on DN and MN because these are the "story-tellers'" collections. The formulas and literary features are clearest and most regularly complete in them. They appear consistently too, however, in the AN and also in the SN where, even though they occur in increasingly abbreviated form, they are nevertheless retained. Furthermore in this collection (the SN) the same Teaching will frequently be repeated in more than one of these three categories.[86]

The above suggests two things. The first is that the categories were important and had to be respected and recorded by the early redactors. Had this not been the case the abbreviated style of the SN could easily have justified their omission. The second is that Teachings that appeared in different categories of sutta were differently regarded. Hence the importance of retaining the mode or modes in which a particular Teaching was presented.

[85] Cf. Frauwallner on the creation of "the lists of teachers of the Vinaya" being "on the pattern of and as a counterpart to the Vedic lists of teachers, in order to bestow on the own tradition an authority similar to the Vedic one". (1956, 62)

[86] e.g. SN iv 219, § 15 is a Consultation whose teaching is repeated in § 16 (p. 221) as a Sermon. SN v 70, § 4 (4) is a Sermon, § 5 (p. 72) is a Consultation, and § 6 (p. 73) is a Debate, all on the same subject. etc.

2. The implications of these categories for our understanding of the Teaching.

There are, in the Pāli Canon, suttas that factually and drily convey the Teaching, suttas which present it by means of drama or poetry, suttas that present it through discussion, and so forth. In our own culture we would rightly give different weight to information packaged in different ways. A factual, dry account contains a different quality of information: clearer, more precise, more categorical; compared with that presented as part of a theatrical production or a poetry recitation. We would accept more readily the impartial arguments of a good scholar to those put forward by politicians in debate: we would recognise the politician's purposes. Different genres of literature, therefore, arouse different expectations. Sermons may be expected to convey information most directly and clearly; Consultations show the problems that arose and how they were dealt with and solved. Both of these seem rather reliable forms for conveying information (although one can never exclude later manipulation by the redactors). Debates, however, are quite a different category. These are the records, slanted no doubt in the Buddha's favour, of public events. They are entertainments for the purpose of propaganda. They serve also to teach the monks how to refute challenges that were, presumably, regularly being made. It is therefore only right that we give the correct weighting to these distinct genres of literature from another culture.

At some point in the history of Buddhism, undoubtedly for good reasons and probably for historically authentic ones, different aspects of the Teaching were presented and communicated in different forms of (oral) literature. It is, however, a frequent custom in research to treat the contents of the Nikāyas and even of the entire Pāli canon as homogenous. In research of this type, occurrences of one particular idea or theme are collected no matter where they occur in the Canon, and an attempt is made to understand them as a single group, a coherent whole. This method treats this enormous body of different types of texts as if it were

231/3

all one and the same genre of literature, and therefore that all its various messages, no matter in what genre they be conveyed, have the same weight. This is not even the the case in the very largest scale, as the discussions about the concept *atta* show.[87] Although this kind of work can be coherent, meaningful and very successful[88], more usually it is unclear and leads simply to an exposition of the writer(-believer)'s own interpretation of what Buddhism is. Looking, therefore, beyond this most general view, we can see that the establishment of these different categories of sutta (and the existence of others not treated in this paper) requires that each category be respected and given an appropriate weighting in future research.

3. The implications of these categories for our understanding of the different purposes of the MN and the DN.

The purposes of SN and AN have been described and accounted for thus:

> " ... the early existence of some kind of Abhidharma would explain the peculiar shape of the Sūtrapiṭaka, or rather of two sections of it, the *Saṃyuktāgama*/P. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* and the *Ekottarāgama*/P. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. The former arranges traditional utterances ascribed to the Buddha subject-wise; the latter follows a scheme determined by the number of subdivisions in the items discussed."[89]

The difference between these texts and the MN and DN is clear and incontrovertible. The question is whether this research into categories of sutta can give insight into the purposes of the DN and the MN, and

[87] See Oetke, 1988. See also Bronkhorst's review of Oetke (Bronkhorst, 1989a).
[88] e.g. Bronkhorst, 1986.
[89] Bronkhorst, 1985, 316.

especially whether it can enable a distinction to be made regarding the purpose of these two works. For instance, it makes sense that a straight sermon to the monks might be expected to contain the Teaching in its most essential form. A Consultation may be expected to show the Teaching spontaneously developing in response to a particular situation and a particular problem.[90] A Debate, however, may be regarded as an exercise in publicity. It is an opportunity for propaganda. Something is always at stake. Not only must the best question be asked, and the best answer be given, but converts must be won and lay support must be gained. Under these circumstances we may expect that, appropriate to the situation, a particular presentation of the Teaching is given. We may expect this to be religiously sound, but exaggerated, because the Debates were public competitive occasions. If the distribution of these different types of suttas between these two collections should show a clear distinction between them we may then be able to propose that each of the first four Nikāyas came about in order to serve a distinct need and purpose in the growing and developing Buddhist community, and we may also then be able to define the function of these two collections.

Statistics usefully show up the different characters of MN and DN.

The Statistics.

The statistics that this analysis supplies are rather surprising in their implications. For this reason I have been particularly stringent regarding which suttas should count for statistical purposes, and which should be omitted. Where I thought there was any room for doubt with regard to categorisation I did not include the sutta. I have indicated my criteria under each heading. Composite suttas, i.e. Debates that become Sermons, Sermons that become Consultations, and so forth, have been

[90] On the Buddha's teaching style see Kloppenborg, 1989.

systematically omitted. This means that the results here are systematically minimised, and therefore all the more convincing.

i. SERMONS.

A Sermon is here defined as a sutta which has both a standard introductory formula ("1" or "2") and a standard concluding formula, and the Sermon internal structure. This is the definition which will include the smallest number of suttas in this category.

DN Sermons: 1; 14; 22; 26; 30; 32; 33; 34.
Total: 8 / 34.
Percentage of suttas in DN: 23.53%.

MN Sermons: 1 - 3 (contains 2 such sermons); 6; 10; 11; 15 - 20; 25; 27; 33; 34; 39; 40; 45 - 47; 51; 53; 64; 67; 68; 102; 103; 105; 106; 110 - 113; 117; 118 - 120; 122; 123; 129; 130; 131 - 134; 136 - 141; 145; 146; 149; 152.
Total: 57 / 152.
Percentage of suttas in MN: 36.8%.

Result:

The percentage of Sermons in the MN is $1\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than that in the DN.

ii. CONSULTATIONS.

Only suttas in which a member of the Order consults the Buddha are included here. This is to avoid the need to justify at length the categorisation as Consultations rather than as Debates of those occasions where someone who is not a monk consults the Buddha.

DN Consultations: 29.
Total: 1 / 34.
Percentage: 2.94%.

MN Consultations: 8; 12; 13; 18; 21; 22; 23; 31; 32; 37; 38; 43; 44; 48; 59; 61; 62; 63; 65; 66; 67; 68; 70; 73; 78; 81; 83; 97; 104; 106; 109; 115; 121; 122; 125; 126; 128; 132; 133; 134; 136; 144; 146; 151.
Total: 44 / 152.
Percentage: 29.94%.

Result:

The percentage of Consultations in the MN is ten times greater than that in the DN.

iii. DEBATES.

The criteria for suttas to be included here as Debates are that there must be a clear challenge, the challenge must be disputed, and there must be an acknowledged defeat, or the Debate must be a reported Debate or a Debate with potential opponents. Debates between monks are excluded, as are those suttas that start as a Debate but finish in some other way, such as refused Debates.

DN Debates: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 23; 24; 25; 28; 31.
Total: 18 / 34.
Percentage: 52.94%.

233/13

MN Debates: 7; 14; 27; 30; 35; 36; 56; 58; 60; 72; 74; 75; 76; 79; 80; 84; 90; 91; 92; 93; 94; 95; 96; 99; 100; 101; 102; 107; 124.

Total: 29 / 152.

Percentage: 19%.

Result:

The percentage of Debates in the DN is more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ times greater than that in the MN.

These statistics show that the MN contains proportionately a greater number of Sermons and Consultations than the DN and a proportionately fewer number of Debates. How can this be accounted for?

The tradition holds that suttas were assigned to the MN and DN according to their length at the first council.[91] If we accept this then all that these statistics show is that, because there are more Debates in the DN, Debates are usually longer than Sermons and Consultations. This is a possible explanation but it seems also rather superficial and arguments can be brought forward against it.

The legend of the first Council in the Pāli Vināya that holds that Ānanda recited the Sutta Piṭaka, and therefore each of the Nikāyas as we know them today, is generally held to be untenable.[92] On this ground we may dismiss any idea that in an extraordinary feat of mental sorting Ānanda achieved this relationship at that time (or that he was purposefully and intentionally organising the suttas in this way as he memorised them in his position as the Buddha's chief attendant). In any case the practicalities of such a sorting in the absence of writing are

[91] Norman, 1983, 30. See Horner, 1954, x for further discussion.
[92] Lamotte, 1958, 141 foll.

unimaginable. Staal has produced a fantasy about how Pāṇini's grammar could have been composed orally. It imaginatively involves hordes of pupils who, acting as living note-books, memorise relevant portions of the work in progress.[93] As Bronkhorst has said, it is a charming invention, and an implausible speculation.[94] The monumental task of re-sorting orally-learned texts in the absence of writing makes it extremely unlikely that this legend contains a grain of truth.

The notion that texts were re-sorted orally brings with it further problems, not the least of which is the problem of attachment — so fundamental to human nature and so important in this literature. The Vinaya account of the first Council attests to the attachment of the monk Purāṇa to the version of the Teaching he had heard from the Buddha above that offered to him by the Council.[95] It is unlikely that Purāṇa stood alone. People do not so easily give up features of their religion or system of belief or accept a different version of it or make compromises. The differences between the Dīgha-*bhāṇakas* and the Majjhima-*bhāṇakas* regarding the constitution of the Khuddaka Nikāya testifies to this.[96]

How, then, did the collections get their earliest form? Norman describes the situation after the second council when the collections had begun to be formed and the schools were still in contact.

> "The fact that one and the same *sutta* is sometimes found in more than one *nikāya* in the Pāli canon would seem to indicate that the *bhāṇakas* of the various *nikāyas* could not always agree about the allocation of *suttas*. The fact that the *sūtras* in each Sanskrit *āgama* do not coincide with their Pāli equivalents would seem to indicate that each school had its own *bhāṇakas* who while all agreeing in general with the other *bhāṇakas* of their

[93] Staal, 1986, 37 foll.
[94] Bronkhorst, 1989.
[95] Vin ii 289 foll.
[96] Norman, 1983, 31 foll.

own and other sects, nevertheless preferred to differ over the placing of some *sūtras*. This suggests that there was in early times a large collection of *suttas* which were remembered by heart, and the task of allocating them to the various *nikāyas/bhāṇakas* had not been finished or the allocation completely agreed, by the time the schools began to separate."[97]

It is thus more likely that originally suttas came to be remembered in different groups or sets rather spontaneously and naturally in response to the exigencies of particular situations and requirements, and that these groups form the cores of the different Nikāyas as we know them today.

What could those exigencies that brought about the form of the collections have been ? The early Buddhists had two important and urgent purposes. One was to gain converts and lay support; the other was to ensure the survival of their religion. Without success in both of these their Teaching would die out. How were they to realise these purposes ? Obviously a body of (oral) literature was necessary. To attract converts the early Buddhists first needed an audience. For that their initial communications had at least to be attractive and entertaining. Of the first four Nikāyas by far the most entertaining texts occur in the DN.[98] The most dramatic Debates are there, for example in the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* (DN 2), the *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* (DN 3), and the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta* (DN 4); and the most philosophical debates, e.g. in the *Kassapa Sīhanāda Sutta* (DN 9) and the *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta* (DN 9). The most magical and

[97] Norman, 1983, 31.

[98] Monks would, of course, not have been excluded from this entertainment. Without radio or TV, society at the time of the Buddha was dependent on locally generated entertainment. The *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1) gives a rather full catalogue of what was available. But monks were excluded from or at least discouraged from participating in all of these forms. Only one form of entertainment was available to them: the hearing and reciting of suttas. The *Brahmajāla Sutta* leaves nothing over but this, I think.

inspirational legends are also found there, for instance that of the lives of Buddhas in the *Mahāpadāna Sutta* (DN 14); the legend of King Mahāvijita's sacrifice in the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* (DN 5); the legend of Brahmā's respect for the Buddha in the *Kevaddha Sutta* (DN 11); the history of the town Kusinārā in the *Mahāsudassana Sutta* (DN 17); the Buddha's encounter with the *gandhabba* Janavasabha, the claimed reincarnation of King Bimbisāra, with its tale of rebirth and life among the gods (DN 18); and so forth. My argument is that for the purposes of propaganda, to attract converts and lay-supporters to the new religion and to spread its message, it was necessary to have a particular type of communication. This would have had to be entertaining: viz., stories and accounts capable of spreading the fame of the founder, of giving some idea of his character and attainments, of providing enough of the Teaching to arouse interest and to inspire conversion, and, not the least, containing accounts of converts and supporters from many different areas of society to serve as examples to the present audience. The Dīgha Nikāya conforms to this requirement. This may be why the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta found its way into this collection.

There are further statistics which support this position. These concern a comparison between the target groups of the Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāyas. The DN was not particularly a collection for the monks. Of the 34 DN suttas only 9, i.e. 26.4% are directed towards bhikkhus. The other 73.4% are directed towards brahmans (11 suttas = 32.3%), paribbājakas (5 suttas = 14.7%), and variously towards kings, kṣatriyas, acelas, Licchavis, gods, yakkhas and gandhabbas. By comparison, in the MN 92 of the 152 suttas, i.e. 60.5%, are directed only towards the monks.

The contents of the MN suggest that it had as its purpose the presentation of the Leader, both as a real person and as an archetype (a Tathāgata), and the integration of new monks into the community and into the practice. Most of the intimate biographical suttas appear in this

235/3

Nikāya[99] (MN 19, 26) as well as suttas about the Tathāgata and how to relate to him (how to study the Tathāgata, *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta*, MN 47; the nature of the Tathāgata, *Naḷakapāna Sutta*, MN 68; the Tathāgata's wonderful qualities: *Acchariyabbhutadhamma Sutta*, MN 123). There are suttas teaching the monks how to live together peacefully (*Kosambiya Sutta*, MN 48), how to settle disputes about what the Buddha taught (*Kiṅti Sutta*, MN 103), what the right eating habits are to follow (*Bhaddāli Sutta*, MN 66), and how forest monks should adjust their behaviour when they return to the community (*Guḷissāni Sutta*, MN 69). There is a sutta on the way of the learner (*Sekha Sutta*, MN 53). There are suttas on the technicalities of the Teaching: how to practise (*Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, MN 10), how to control thoughts (*Dvedhāvitakka Sutta*, MN 19), how perception works (*Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, MN 18), what hindrances are and how to get rid of them (*Cūḷa-Assapura Sutta*, MN 40), how to deal with the sense pleasures, (*Āṇañjasappāya Sutta*, MN 106), how to practise the Eightfold Path (*Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, MN 117), how to train character (*Anumāna Sutta*, MN 15) and so forth. All of the technicalities of the Teaching appear here in detail, whether taught directly or within an account of a conversation, and especially with regard to what they are and how they are to be dealt with in practice. There are also Sermons on problems connected with the practice and its difficulty: on the problems of meditation in a forest and when to give it up (*Vanapattha Sutta*, MN 19), on pitfalls along the Path (*Mahāsāropama Sutta*, MN 29), on how to test whether one has truly attained the goal (*Chabbisodhana Sutta*, MN 112).

These facts suggest a general pattern. DN and MN clearly have different and complementary characters. Without denying the inclusion of additional, later suttas over time, and perhaps also under a different system of categorisation, and, similarly, without denying some

[99] The intimate biographical suttas would have had the important function of introducing the monks to the personal side of the founder, so that they could get to know him personally or at least feel that they were doing that.

movement of texts from one to the other[100] and reduplication of each other's texts, the general trend suggests that indeed the collection now known as the Dīgha Nikāya derived from an original, probably spontaneously created, collection of publicity material for the early Buddhists, while the collection now known as the Majjhima Nikāya was the collection which arose to serve their need to introduce new converts to the character of the Leader, the Buddha, and the important disciples, to integrate new converts into their values and their way of life, and to provide them with the fundamentals of the Teaching and the Practice.[101] We thus see that the first four Nikāyas reflect the need of the Early Buddhists to convey, study and systematise their Doctrine at increasingly deeper levels.

4. The contribution of these categories for distinguishing textual units.

The existence of these three distinct categories of sutta, each with own unique structure, needs to be taken into account in any attempt to define the original suttas that the Buddha taught. It has implications with regard to the scientific view of long suttas, of frequently occurring pericopes, and of the integrity of individual suttas.

The view that long suttas are late amalgams of authentic material has been expressed.[102] This is in spite of the fact that suttas exist which testify to night-long marathons of Teaching, with Ānanda taking over when the Buddha had become weary.[103] Clearly a great deal of material can be united into a night-long sutta. If one accepts the antiquity of the category of Debate suttas then one must accept that long suttas are not necessarily amalgams of "bits" of the Teaching.

[100] Pande, 1974, 78.2

[101] See Dutt, 1925, 114 foll. and 1970, 44 foll. for the early custom and practice of specialising in the memorisation of particular types of texts.

[102] Pande, 1974; etc.

[103] e.g. *Sekha Sutta*, MN 53.

There is also the tendency to see the "bits" of the Teaching, or pericopes as "original Buddhism". Once again the category of Debate sutta requires that this view be revised. It is on the contrary likely that the pericopes in these suttas are their original features, necessitated by their structure and function.

Finally, as the strict literary style of these suttas adheres consistently to the use of clearly categorisable formulas and clearly definable internal structures and uses these for demarcation, we may make some factually supported statements about insertions. We may say that, e.g. because the appearance of formula "1" or "2" in the middle of a sutta is so rare, the cases where it does occur may indicate that in the course of time two distinct Sermons have became merged.[104] We can, unfortunately, never be entirely certain that the suttas do not represent an occasion when the very two Sermons were given consecutively.

The case is very much clearer with regard to Debates because of their uniformity of structure and the formal exigencies of the debate situation. We may hypothesize with confidence, therefore, that two debates suttas, the *Mahāli Sutta* (DN 6) and the *Jāliya Sutta* (DN 7), have lost important parts. The *Mahāli Sutta* begins in a similar way to other debates with important brahmans. It begins with the information that there were many important brahmans in the area at that time,[105] and then continues with a statement of the Buddha's credentials.[106] It then incorporates what could easily be the beginning of a different debate: the introduction of a different adversary, Oṭṭhadda, the Licchavi, with his followers. In the debate that follows, however, the brahmans are forgotten. Their role is never shown. Instead, the debate that is recorded is with Oṭṭhadda, the Licchavi. Then, in the middle of this debate, there is introduced rather suddenly a quite separate debate which is both thematically different and also a debate of a different type, namely, a

[104] E.g. the *Dhammadāyada Sutta*, MN 3.
[105] Cf. the *Tevijja Sutta*, DN 13.
[106] Cf. the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta*, DN 4; the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*, DN 5; etc.

Reported Debate. At the end of this debate, in conformity with the style of the Reported Debate, there is no formula acknowledging defeat (cf. formulas "21", "22", "23"), but instead the type of acknowledgement formula ("13") that monks give at the end of a Sermon or Consultation. It appears here that either the Debate with the brahmans that the *Mahāli Sutta* leads us to expect has been lost in time, or a recitor/redactor has introduced this beginning without realising its implications, i.e. at a later time when the literary conventions and their implications had been forgotten. The *Jāliya Sutta*, DN 7, moreover, comprises just this Reported Debate, only given "live", so to speak, i.e. not reported, but in the form of a Dramatic Debate. In this account, because it is a Dramatic Debate, one would expect the defeat formulas. The ascetics of DN 7, however, do not become converts. This is at odds with the formulaic and conforming nature of this genre of Debate.

Conclusion.

To study these texts is to be open to their qualities as literature: to their capacity to convey a Teaching convincingly; to their capacity to tell a story, and to their capacity to depict a culture. It is also to be curious, to wonder what sort of a society, what sort of times make the success of a Buddha possible ?

In doing this work I could not but be struck by the way the Buddha is depicted to have lived his life and fulfilled his tasks as a religious leader: setting a convincing example, Teaching (in the form of Sermons), being available for Consultations, participating actively also in the society of his time as a Debater, and also taking time to maintain his own meditation and practice. I also found remarkable the depiction of the Buddha as a religious leader among other religious leaders — large numbers of them more or less successfully (the remaining literature shows which were the successful ones[107]) — fulfilling this archetypal

[107] Basham, 1951.

237/3

role. And I wondered whether the great contemporary upsurge of interest in Buddhism, both experiential and scientific,[108] and in all other forms of personal growth and spiritual development, has not come about because the times we are living in right now and the times of the Buddha have indeed certain similarities. Some people call our times "the New Age", meaning an age of increasing spiritual awareness emerging from a previous age of materialism and struggle for survival. Buddhism, Jainism, Ājivikas, Brāhmaṇas, Upaniṣads — don't these all suggest that Buddhism arose in similar times ?

La Conversion Joy Manné

[108] See the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* for many articles on this subject.

ABBREVIATIONS

Texts as in Bechert, 1988.
DB = Dialogues of the Buddha (Rhys Davids, 1899)
MLS = Middle Length Sayings (Horner, 1954)
tr. = translation

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